

FINANCIAL TIMES

Europe's Business Newspaper

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Alcatel and Sprint form \$300m data network venture

Alcatel of France, the world's leading supplier of telecoms equipment, and Sprint, the US long-distance telephone company, are to form a \$300m-turnover joint venture in data communications systems. The company, Alcatel Data Networks, will sell equipment and systems and will be among the top two companies in the field with an estimated 25 per cent of world market share. Page 14

Germany halts defence spending Germany is to halt all new defence contracts and cancel plans to buy a D35bn (\$1.8bn) high-altitude US electronic reconnaissance system, as part of a total review of defence spending. Page 14

Electrolux, Swedish white goods manufacturer, is to halve its 1993 dividends to SKr6.25 (81 cents) a share. The move, likely to be followed by other Swedish companies, came in spite of virtually unchanged profits. Page 15; Lex, Page 14

Japanese rate cut awaited The Bank of Japan is expected to cut its official discount rate today from 3.25 to 2.5 per cent, after its governor, Yasushi Mieno, said the economy was in need of support. Page 4

Deors orders Hoover Inquiry Jacques Delors, European Commission president, has asked Brussels to investigate whether Hoover's relocation of jobs from France to Scotland infringes EC regulations. Page 2

Spain reserves right to more expulsions Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin insisted Israel retained the right to expel Palestinians and implied that the US had condemned December's expulsion of 400 alleged Islamic militants. His speech seemed certain to complicate prospects of resuming Middle East peace talks which Washington wants reconvened within weeks. Page 14

Bertrand admits taking loan France's prime minister Pierre Bertrand said he had acted properly in receiving a FF15m (\$10,000) interest-free loan from a businessman later charged with insider dealing. Page 2

US set to pass family leave bill A bill that would require most companies to provide up to 12 weeks' unpaid leave for family emergencies looked likely to pass in law. Former president George Bush vetoed the bill twice. Page 5

US air force contracts The US air force has awarded a \$724m personal computer contract to Zenith Data Systems, an arm of Groupe Bull, and Government Technology Services of Virginia, ending a long-running saga. Page 3

GTE sells lighting division GTE of the US has sold its \$550m-turnover GTE Sylvania International lighting operations in a management buy-out, for an undisclosed sum. Page 15

Dublin move on peace talks Ireland's new foreign minister Dick Spring offered to hold talks with Northern Ireland's Unionist leaders in an effort to unblock stalled peace talks. Page 7

Salomon shares rise Salomon shares rose sharply after the company reported fourth-quarter profits of \$145m thanks to a strong showing from its Wall Street securities brokerage. Page 15

Chrysler, US carmaker which raised \$1.78bn on Tuesday in an international share offering, was upgraded in its credit rating by Standard & Poor's. Page 18

Budapest prepares sell-off Hungary said it planned to privatise its main utilities this year, including telecoms, gas distribution and electricity sectors, as well as state-owned commercial banks. Page 3

BBG Bank, German bank majority-owned by Crédit Lyonnais of France, made a net loss of DM1.1bn (\$631m) last year after raising provisions against potential country risks. Page 3

London bomb chase Two bombs, assumed to be the work of the Irish Republican Army, exploded on London's transport network. No one was hurt. Page 4

Kuwaiti ban defied Kuwaiti MPs and journalists said they would defy a ban on issuing unsanctioned information on alleged fraud in the management of Kuwait's overseas investments. Page 4

Banks lend Daf short-term funds

UK plants could be excluded from plan to save Dutch and Belgian operations

By Kevin Done and Robert Preston in London, David Brown in Amsterdam and Andrew Hill in Brussels

prospects of its operations.

Administrative receivers were appointed late yesterday to Daf's main UK operations while in the Netherlands strenuous efforts were under way to salvage the Daf operations.

Dutch government officials met union leaders and provided guarantees that the payroll would still be met. It would act as a short-term financier in the unexpected event that the bank consortium, led by ABN Amro, failed to provide bridging finance.

It is understood that an attempt is being made to create a

new company in the Benelux countries, which could include Daf's present medium and heavy truck production units based there. It is unclear if any of the UK operations would be included.

Mr Koos Andriessen, Dutch economic affairs minister, said he believed that Daf could survive in a concentrated form but warned of painful job cuts.

A spokesman for Mr Luc Van den Brande, who heads the Flanders government in Belgium, said that the receivers were considering liquidating the old company and regrouping its heavy and

medium truck activities in a new business. He said other plans were also being considered.

The new bank fund came from a banking syndicate led by ABN Amro. It includes Rabobank of the Netherlands, Générale de Banque of Belgium, Credit Lyonnais of France and three UK banks, Barclays, Lloyds and National Westminster. NatWest has taken charge of co-ordinating bank creditors in the UK, though ABN Amro retains the lead role in the Netherlands.

All the UK banks participated in the new £150m loan, even though they had refused on Monday to contribute to a £150m bridging loan because of last-minute insistence by the Dutch government that the banks also provide a guarantee of long-term financial support.

Other creditors asked to make

sacrifices included the investment banking arms of the Dutch government and the Flemish regional government, which last year lent £167m and £172.2m (\$35m). Holders of preference shares and of £150m in bonds would also have been asked to convert part of what they are owed into ordinary shares.

European crisis deepens as currencies weaken and slow growth threatens Emu

Speculators push Danish krone to floor in ERM

By Hilary Barnes in Copenhagen and Robert Graham in Rome

THE DANISH krone fell victim to an intense burst of speculation inside the European exchange rate mechanism yesterday, tumbling to its floor against three currencies.

The Danish authorities raised short-term interest rates and European central banks intervened to support the currency as it fell to its lowest permitted floors against the punt, the guilder and the D-Mark.

The pressure on the krone, which followed the weekend devaluation of the Irish punt, has raised speculation among currency dealers that another realignment of the ERM will be

needed. Yesterday's new round of ERM turbulence came despite a tiny reduction in the cost of short-term borrowing and a half percentage point cut in Italy's discount rate, to 11.5 per cent. The French move did not prevent the franc slipping by nearly ½ a centime against the D-Mark by the end of London trading.

In Copenhagen, Mrs Marianne Jelved, economy minister in Denmark's new Social Democratic administration, said the government would not waver in its support for the krone.

She warned speculators: "It will be expensive not to listen to what I am saying." The central bank increased the rate at which it buys certificates of deposit

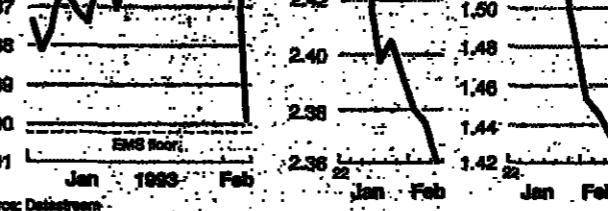
from commercial banks from 11.5 to 12 per cent.

The government yesterday presented a set of gloomy forecasts predicting higher unemployment, lower growth and a larger budget deficit than predicted by its predecessor.

Unemployment is forecast to rise to 11.6 per cent on average this year from about 11.1 per cent in 1992. Growth in gross domestic product would be about 1.9 per

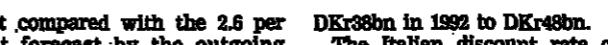
Danish Krone

Against the D-Mark (DKr per DM)



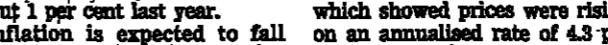
Sterling

Against the D-Mark (DKr per DM)



Sterling

Against the US dollar



Pound hits record lows in heavy trading

By Philip Stephens, James Blitz and Peter Norman in London

STERLING fell yesterday to record lows against the D-Mark, the French franc and the yen in one of its most turbulent days since leaving the European exchange rate mechanism last September.

Senior ministers insisted last night that the UK government would "keep its nerve". With the collapse of Daf, the Dutch-based truck manufacturer which has big UK operations, delivering a further blow to the fragile prospects for economic recovery, there is no appetite in Downing Street for a rise in interest rates to stabilise the pound.

But some of Mr John Major's cabinet colleagues were acknowledging that, if the pound's slide accelerated, it would threaten the credibility of the government's anti-inflation strategy. If monetary conditions were no longer consistent with sustained, non-inflationary growth, Mr Norman Lamont, chancellor of the exchequer, would have little choice but to increase the cost of borrowing. Paradoxically, hopes of lower

Continued on Page 14

Low EC growth a threat to plans for Emu

By Lionel Barber in Brussels

this year, and 11.5 per cent in 1994 – meaning that about 18m people in the EC could be out of work next year.

Mr Christopherson conceded that the poor growth outlook raised questions about whether member states could meet the tough criteria on economic convergence outlined in the Maastricht treaty as a precondition for economic and monetary union. He repeated calls for Germany to cut its interest rates to stimulate a recovery.

The Commission has generally avoided statements which could be viewed as challenging Emu's credibility. While Mr Christopherson said he was confident that a majority of states would be ready to sign up to Emu in 1997, he acknowledged there was a "strong link" between EC efforts to promote growth and the implementation of the Maastricht's convergence programmes.

The Commission's annual report, which was approved at yesterday's weekly meeting of the Commission, shows that only four countries – Denmark, France, Ireland and Luxembourg – met Maastricht's budget deficit criteria last year.

The EC deficit average increased from 4.6 per cent of GDP in 1991 to 5.3 per cent in 1992. The UK public finances showed a marked deterioration, with the deficit shooting up from 2.8 per cent of GDP in 1991 to 6.2 per cent in 1992 and a likely 8.3 per cent and 8.2 per cent in 1993 and 1994 respectively.

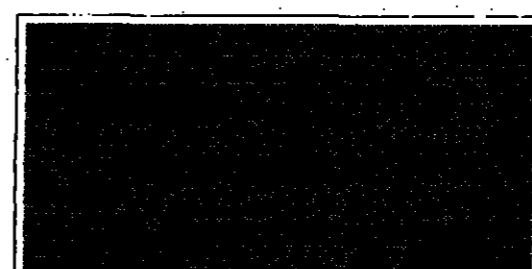
Differences between member states' inflation records narrowed by about 0.7 per cent to 4.6 per cent, but these were less favourable than in the US and Japan.

Recent devaluations inside the European exchange rate mechanism threaten to revive inflation among member states, the report says.

At the Commission meeting yesterday, several commissioners were reported to have expressed concern about continuing insta-

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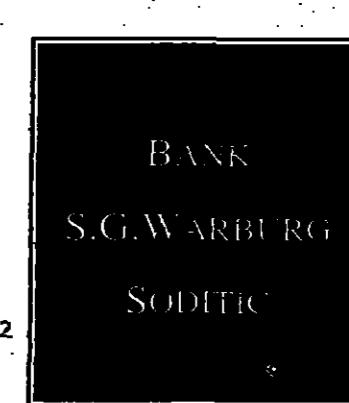
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Joe H. in LjP

The Hoover 'job poaching' case has infuriated France. FT writers examine the implications

Brussels expected to clear Hoover

By David Gardner in Brussels

MR Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission, has asked the Brussels civil service to investigate whether Hoover's relocation of jobs from Dijon in France to Cambuslang in Scotland infringes any EC regulations.

The investigation follows a complaint from France, which the Commission must examine.

Mr Delors and Mr Padraig Flynn, the social affairs commissioner, are to meet a delegation of workers from Hoover's Dijon plant in Brussels today, when the Commission is expected to have concluded that it had no grounds to act in the controversy.

While officials in Brussels strongly criticise the fact that Hoover's new Scottish workers will have no access to pension rights and sickness benefit for the first two years of their contracts, most contend that the jobs transfer breaks no rules.

Nevertheless, Mr Delors is expected to use the Hoover case to press hard for a relaunch of the EC's social action programme, aimed at raising working conditions and rights, when the new Commission is invested by the European Parliament next week.

On Monday Mr Delors attacked the practice of "job-poaching" by the levelling downwards of workers' rights in order to attract investment.

Though he did not mention the UK or the Hoover case, French ministers meeting in Brussels did. The Commission president is also likely to raise the case at a European Socialist conference on jobs and growth in Brussels today.

Aides to Mr Delors say cases such as Hoover are bringing the EC further into disrepute among workers unhappy about the Community's inability to generate growth and jobs.

One senior French official at the Commission remarked that "this looks very bad for Delors in France," where he is believed still to nudge political ambitions to succeed President François Mitterrand.

The Commission's social affairs directorate was yesterday examining whether the Hoover deal infringed highly technical clauses in the 1980 insolvency directive. These relate to adequate protection for workers in the hypothetical event of insolvency, and in this case focus on Hoover's use of surpluses in its UK group pension fund to invest in the company.

Officials acknowledge they are going through the motions, since the existence of the surplus indicates full coverage were Hoover to close.

Social dumping: hardly an open and shut case

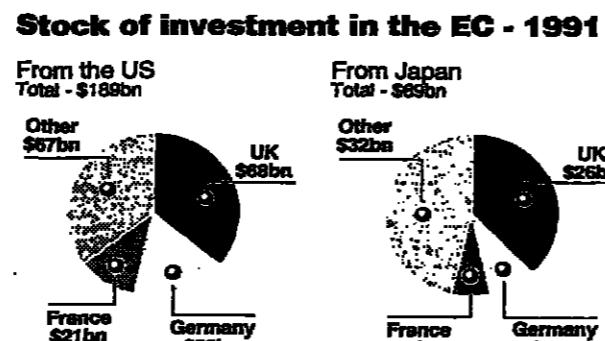
The arguments about switching jobs between countries are not so simple, writes David Goodhart, Labour Editor

THOMSON Consumer Electronics, the state-owned French group, last year rationalised its European operations by closing its Ferguson television plant in Gosport, southern England, with the loss of more than 3,000 jobs.

The event scarcely merited a mention at the time on either side of the Channel. But some British trade unionists are now recalling it as the acrimonious dispute over the transfer of work from Hoover's plant in eastern France to Scotland rumbles on.

This sort of cross-channel sniping reflects how completely relations between British and French unions have broken down.

But it also illustrates the difficulty facing unions in dealing with the ebb and flow of jobs across the European Community as a wave of recession-in-



duced restructuring begins.

Following the British opt-out from the Maastricht social chapter, and the subsequent devaluation of sterling, many continental European workers and politicians fear that capital will be sucked into the "Hong-

King of Europe" at their expense.

The propaganda material of Britain's inward investment agencies certainly stresses the relative freedom of Britain's "hire and fire" workplace culture and the relatively low

labour costs. But the reality is that neither the opt-out nor the devaluation were factors in Hoover's decision to shift some jobs to Scotland.

Britain has always had a relatively unregulated labour market which used to be qualified by strong trade unions, now considerably weakened. British wages are also low by EC standards, but the real advantage enjoyed by the UK is low non-wage labour costs.

These are usually about 15 per cent of wage costs compared with more than 50 per cent in many other EC countries. That is partly because the UK pays for health care through general taxation while employers have to bear a large part of health care costs in several continental countries.

This clearly was just one factor in Hoover's decision but it

is not something that the social chapter directly affects.

Mr William Foust, president of Hoover Europe, said yesterday that non-wage labour costs of only 10 per cent in Scotland, compared with 45 per cent in France, was a factor in the company's decision. But the decision was also influenced by the fact that the Scottish plant had spare capacity.

Hoover's decision is unlikely

to herald any significant increase in Britain's comparative advantage. It is based on long-established factors which Hoover, a particularly footloose US investor in Europe, has often found attractive in the past.

Indeed Britain has always been the most popular destination for new international investment within the EC (see chart) and that has not changed markedly in recent

years. Until German car workers started to worry about the Japanese car industry investing in Britain, new international investment had not been the source of much tension, and is unlikely to be much of an issue over coming years as that new investment will not be plentiful.

On "beggar-my-neighbour" industrial restructuring within the EC, where one country loses jobs and another gains them, things are more complex.

But as the Thomson Electronics case illustrates, Britain has often lost out in such restructuring precisely because it is easier and cheaper to close plants in Britain than in most EC countries.

In the Thomson case at Gosport the average redundancy payment was \$10,500 compared with \$71,000 in Spain. In Holland, Spain, and Germany workfare on a redundancy package has to be reached with workplace representatives before closure is allowed. If, for example, British Leyland, Daf decides to keep open its Belgian and Dutch plants and close only its British plant, as seemed possible yesterday, that differential cost of redundancy is likely to be a factor.

Britain also loses out from its relatively low skill base and poor educational standards, one reason behind Ford's decision to switch most of its R&D work to Germany. The "social dumping" theory that capital will flow to areas where labour is cheapest and least protected dragging down labour standards elsewhere, has scarcely materialised in the EC because low wages are usually cancelled out by low productivity.

Another US group deserts France

By William Dawkins in Paris

THE controversy over loss of foreign investment in France deepened yesterday when two US companies - the paper group Kimberly-Clark, and a subsidiary of S C Johnson, the maker of cleaning products - both confirmed reductions in their operations.

Eurolab, an S C Johnson offshoot which makes Johnson's Wax near Tours, is to close with the loss of 190 jobs by June, to concentrate production at larger and cheaper sites at Mijdrecht in the Netherlands and Franklin in Britain.

This was part of a European restructuring plan announced by S C Johnson last September, in which plants in Spain and Portugal will also close with the loss of 400 jobs out of a European workforce of 3,200.

The group wanted to concentrate production on high volumes and leading edge technologies, allowing the optimisation of quality and the creation of integrated supply chains. The level of investments needed is such that not all European production sites could benefit.

Kimberly-Clark, meanwhile, is to cut 312 jobs at a plant near Rouen, one of its two French plants. About 150 workers will remain at the plant, which makes paper handkerchiefs, kitchen towels, hygiene products and industrial rags.

The US group is investing FFr80m (\$14.5m) to update the plant, and concentrate its European production of Kleenex there. No jobs are being transferred abroad.

French promise to make Hoover pay dear

David Buchan in Dijon discovers why the switching of jobs to Scotland touched such a raw nerve

"IT IS social dumping, and it's shameful," says a striker, stamping his foot yesterday outside Hoover's Longvic plant which is to lose most of its jobs to a more compliant Scottish workforce.

"We're nothing against the Scottish workers, just against Mayne (Hoover's owner) and the British government for not signing the European Social Charter," adds another worker.

"The big lesson of the Hoover affair," says Mr Jean-Claude Quentin, secretary general of the local Force Ouvrière trade union, "is that social dumping does not necessarily come from south-east Asia, but from among us Europeans."

What is social dumping? Mr Richard Rankin, marketing director of Hoover Europe, says he is not sure. For him, Hoover has simply made a business decision to stem the red ink on its European operations by shifting all its vacuum cleaner production to its Cambuslang plant near Glasgow. This will entail the loss of 650 jobs at Longvic on Dijon's outskirts, but Hoover says it will save 25 per cent on its costs by having all vacuum cleaners made in one place.

What has aroused French fury is the public concessions made by Scottish workers to win 400 extra jobs at Cambuslang. These include limited period contracts for new workers, constraints on their right to strike, a freeze on regular pay this year and cuts in overtime pay rates, flexible working time and practices and the



A lorry leaves the Longvic plant: the US company is driving into a political storm

introduction of video cameras on the factory floor.

To the French, this is a clear case of the competitive undercutting of worker pay and standards to attract investment, or social dumping as it is catchily known on the continent.

Not surprisingly, the Hoover management contests this. Mr Rankin says the company's decision to shift to Scotland was made on its calculation that it would cut costs by a quarter and that this calculation does not include the Dijon workforce.

That is an understatement. Egged on by all political and union leaders, the French government has asked the European Commission to investigate whether Hoover was

unfairly or illegally bribed with social and financial concessions, into shifting production to Cambuslang, and made clear that it will make Hoover pay dear for its decision.

It is not clear whether Hoover will be able to carry out its decision. The government, for example, says the Hoover redundancies will be among the first to be affected by the new law sponsored by Mrs Martine Aubry, the labour minister who is also the daughter of Mr Jacques Delors, the European Commission president.

This law requires employers to produce alternative employment plans for redundant workers, and without the approval of the unions, redundancies will be legally invalid.

Why has the Hoover affair struck such a raw French nerve? It is not just that unemployment is bumping up against the 3m threshold less than two months before a general election, or that it is another sign that high interest rates and a strong exchange rate are killing the French economy. Other foreign companies are quitting France for lower cost venues, including the UK, with far less fuss.

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Vance and Owen seek to overcome Washington's reservations

Mediators push Bosnia peace plan

By Robert Mauthner
in New York

THE international mediators for a settlement of the Bosnian conflict, Mr Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, continued their uphill battle yesterday to win the UN Security Council's and the US's endorsement for their peace plan.

In the face of what appear to be serious reservations by the Clinton administration about aspects of the plan deemed to favour the Serbs, the mediators have adopted a remarkably robust stance to hammer home their view that the proposed solutions are fair and equitable.

Lord Owen in particular has not hesitated in newspaper and TV interviews to pour ridicule on the arguments of members of the American political establishment who, while calling for international military intervention to stop the killing of Bosnian Moslems, do not seem to be prepared to send ground troops to Bosnia.

Calls for the lifting of the UN arms embargo to help the Bosnian Moslems have been given equally short shrift by Lord Owen, who has pointed out that such a move would lead not only to an intensification of the fighting, but would not be accepted by the British or the French, let alone the Russians. The consensus that has been built up in the Security Council since the end of the cold war could thus be completely wrecked.

Even Mr Cyrus Vance, the UN's representative and a former US Secretary of State, has lost his customary calm under persistent criticism of his negotiating stance. He treated a suggestion at a press conference at the UN on Tuesday



Lord Owen (left) and Mr Cyrus Vance, co-ordinators of efforts by the United Nations to end the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, speaking to reporters at a news conference at UN headquarters in New York yesterday

that he was appeasing the Serbs as "absolute hogwash" which made him "pretty damned angry".

From Mr Vance, that is fighting talk.

The mediators, whose plan has been approved by at least four of the five permanent members of the Security Council, were due to continue their consultations with the other 10 Council members yesterday.

• Laura Silber adds from Belgrade: The UN met Croat and

Serb leaders from the enclave of Krajina yesterday, amid clashes in the disputed territory and throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina. Serb commanders in Krajina accused Croat forces of pushing forward across UN lines, Belgrade radio said.

Mr Boro Martinovic, a member of the self-styled Krajina government, yesterday confirmed that UN officials were meeting both sides in an attempt to begin talks towards

ending the clashes. He said Krajina's Serb leaders had been invited to attend talks at the UN. "But we continue to insist Croat forces unconditionally withdraw to the confrontation line, as called for by the Security Council," he added by telephone from Knin, the mountain-top centre of Krajina.

In Bosnia the UN High Commission of Refugees suspended humanitarian convoys along the route from the

southern city of Mostar to Sarajevo. A UNHCR relief convoy on Tuesday was shelled in a valley near Mostar, killing one person and seriously wounding another. Croatian radio blamed the attack on Serb forces.

Further south, the radio said Serb forces yesterday launched a counter-offensive on the Mostar-Stolac lines. In a conflicting report, Srua, the Bosnian Serb news agency said Croat forces had launched the attack.

Romania private sector surging

By Virginia Marsh
in Bucharest

ROMANIA'S fast-growing private sector, concentrated in trade and services, contributed more than 25 per cent to gross domestic product last year, the national statistics commission's preliminary report for 1992 says.

The 400,000 private companies and businessmen registered since 1989 handled 32 per cent of imports and 26 per cent of services last year, doubling their share of retail sales to 45 per cent.

But private-sector growth failed to offset the continuing state-sector decline, with GDP falling about 15 per cent to \$610 (2337) per head, making Romania the poorest country in Europe after Albania.

Industrial production, more than 90 per cent state-controlled, fell 21.8 per cent last year, contributing to a 54 per cent drop in output since 1989.

Agriculture, where privatisation has been faster, saw a 2.2 per cent fall in output. The report cites shortages of raw material imports as a main cause for the falls.

A 13.6 per cent increase in exports helped narrow Romania's trade deficit to \$33m, down from \$1.3bn in 1991. Top exports in 1992 included metals and metal products, textiles and chemicals.

The budget deficit jumped to 3.6 per cent of GDP, against 1.5 per cent in 1991. Inflation fell to 190 per cent, down from 265 per cent in 1991. But devaluation since the summer has pushed up import costs.

Hungary signals state utilities sell-off this year

By Nicholas Denison
in Budapest

Europe put together – faces competition from Poland and the Czech Republic.

Budapest's ambitious programme for utility privatisation depends heavily on the government's ability to draw up and pass through parliamentary legislation setting regulatory frameworks for each sector. Potential investors' valuations of their acquisition targets hinge on price regulation and so far only a telecommunications act is in place.

The privatisation of Hungary's four large state-owned commercial banks similarly rests on the implementation of a coherent strategy to "consolidate" institutions' bad loans. The Finance Ministry, at odds with the privatisation authorities, is reluctant to countenance a debt write-off sufficiently generous to make the banks attractive to investors.

The ministry, under pressure from an International Monetary Fund delegation currently in Budapest, is worried about the budgetary consequences of a debt write-off.

The authorities have given no precise timetable but Mr Szabo said that the transactions would get under way this year and some could be completed before the end of the year.

Hungary needs the "big projects" to take up the running from consumer goods and food companies which have provided the momentum for privatisation so far. The finalisation of large deals is essential if Hungary is to follow up last year's foreign investment inflow of an estimated \$1.7bn (21.18bn) and privatisation proceeds of \$67.6bn (2553m).

The large transactions are particularly important at a time when Hungary – which has accumulated more foreign capital than the rest of eastern Europe – is in a bind.

Groupe Bull offshoot to share US air force order

By Alan Care

ZENITH Data Systems, the personal computer arm of Groupe Bull of France, and Government Technology Services Inc. of Chantilly, Virginia, have been jointly awarded a controversial \$72m (2479m) contract to supply personal computers to the US air force.

The award of the contract, known as Desktop Four, should end one of the longest-running sagas in recent military procurement history. Ironically, the contract, for about 300,000 personal computers, was placed under new Pentagon procedures designed to speed procurement.

Zenith, of Herndon, Virginia, has been the subsidiary of Groupe Bull, the troubled French computer manufacturer since 1988.

Government Technology Services Inc. is a large systems integrator and equipment sup-

plier specialising in the government market. The award of the contract seems to be a victory for those who were critical of an earlier decision, which was announced last summer, to give the contract in its entirety to Zenith.

Protests came from competitors including Apple Computer and Electronic Data Systems.

Just before last Christmas, to the consternation of Groupe Bull and Zenith, some of the protests were upheld, throwing the future of the contract into confusion.

The protests were upheld on the grounds that Zenith's monitor screens did not comply with the Trade Agreements Act designed to ensure substantial US labour content in products sourced abroad and that the Air Force had not considered sufficiently the advantages of sourcing from more than one supplier.

It is still not clear what proportion of the order will go to

each company. It is understood, however, that the terms of the contract provide each company with a licence to sell its products to the Air Force.

Each will be forced to fight for its share of the overall contract.

The Air Force said yesterday that the computers, printers, software and other equipment will be supplied by the companies by February 1993.

Some 370 bids for the contract had been received, along with 22 proposals.

The award comes as a great relief to Groupe Bull which is still losing money and which was counting on Desktop Four to generate revenues, re-establish its credibility and show that foreign ownership was no bar to doing business with the US government.

It is not known yet whether the disappointed competitors will appeal one more time against the latest decision.

WWF worried on trade rules

By Frances Williams
in Geneva

DRAFT rules designed to reduce technical barriers to international trade will block and even reverse government efforts to raise environmental standards, the World Wide Fund for Nature said yesterday.

A WWF report on the proposed new Technical Barriers to Trade agreement, negotiated in the 112-nation Uruguay Round of trade liberalisation talks, says that the accord would prohibit some environmental regulations and open others to challenge as being trade-restricting.

Mr Charles Arden-Clarke, WWF policy analyst, said yesterday the draft TBT agreement would "cripple national environmental policies and

counter efforts to conserve the Global Commons."

Regulations on the use and transport of toxic chemicals, factory pollution and vehicle emissions could be weakened by the new rules.

The WWF report underscores reservations already expressed by the US and some other countries about the draft TBT text, which aims to ensure that technical regulations and standards do not create unnecessary barriers to trade.

The draft already recognises that countries should not be prevented from taking measures to protect consumers or the environment.

But the draft also requires countries to use international standards, where they exist, unless they can show that these are inappropriate or are ineffective.

The US wants revised wording that would stipulate countries' rights to set environmental consumer and safety standards above international norms. The US and environmental groups have similar concerns over a draft Uruguay Round agreement dealing with measures to protect plant and animal health.

Mr Arden-Clarke said yesterday that the US change would be an improvement but it did not tackle the fundamental problem in that the TBT accord gave precedence to free trade over environmental protection.

The TBT agreement, which would apply to most if not all of the 105 members of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), would replace the present voluntary code, which has 37 signatories.

IMF puts terms for Moscow loan

By Leyla Boulim in Moscow

NEGOTIATIONS on a standby programme which could unlock an extra \$3bn (£1.9bn) International Monetary Fund loan could start as soon as Russia confirms it will take decisive action on macroeconomic stabilisation and structural reform, Mr Michel Camdessus, IMF managing director, said yesterday.

He told *Investiga* newspaper that the world would "not understand" if Moscow repeated what it did last year: agree an ambitious programme but not implement it.

But he added that western financial support would only be forthcoming if Russia took action to strengthen monetary and financial policy.

It would also have to take steps to ensure that "the money stays in Russia and does not immediately end up in bank accounts in Zurich, Paris or London".

Mr Camdessus also called on the government to stop hyperinflation "at any price", saying that many democrats around the world had been "killed" by it.

A likely reference to the political backlash against the IMF in Russia last year. Mr Camdessus was also at pains to stress that any programme would have to suit not just the Fund, but would need to be trusted and accepted by Russian society.

He said the west had delivered all the \$24bn package promised to Russia last year

except for a \$36m rouble stabilisation fund.

Russia had received debt relief worth \$7.2bn, plus \$12.6bn fresh credit from other countries, the EC, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and finally a first \$1bn from the Fund.

• Russian exports fell 25 per cent last year to \$38.1bn in sales outside the former Soviet Union, the official Goskomstat statistics agency reported yesterday.

The final results for 1992 crown a year which started with initial government hopes for an export boom, soon followed by an attempt by the Foreign Economic Relations Ministry to suggest that exports had stabilised to 1991's level.



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John in Tokyo

NEWS: INTERNATIONAL

Mitsuzuka: one putt away from premier

LDP faction leader is out of the bunker and on course to win, says Robert Thomson

JAPANESE politicians are fond of comparing their fortunes to those of golfers. A year ago Mr Hiroshi Mitsuzuka was trapped in a deep bunker. His faction in the ruling Liberal Democratic party was falling apart, and other leaders were settling old rivalries by excluding his allies from senior government posts.

Now Mr Mitsuzuka is a short putt from the prime minister's ship. The turmoil within the LDP has left him with the largest faction, and he heads the party's Policy Affairs Research Council, which is leading debate on constitutional and political reform. It is a comeback highlighting the importance of what Japanese politicians call "the recovery shot".

The present tasks for Mr Mitsuzuka, 55, are to stay out of scandal's way and project a statesman-like image in the quest for that image he has recently been pressing the case for political reform.

Yesterday Mr Mitsuzuka told Mr Kinti Miyazawa, the prime minister: "We need political laws to stop corruption, like those introduced by Gladstone in 1883 [The Corruption and Illegal Practices Act]."

The comment recognises that the expense of Japanese politics tempts players to take illegal donations and provide unethical favours, as was the case during the Tokyo Sagawa scandal. Mr Mitsuzuka yesterday insisted that the scandal involving a trucking company was "a thing of the past" and "of interest only to academics".

He may be underestimating the anger of ordinary Japanese over the affair, which involved payments to leading politicians and the prosecution's lenient treatment of Mr Shin

Kanemaru, the former "godfather" of Japanese politics, who was fined only Y200,000 for the illegal receipt of Y500m (£2.7m). But it is true that Japanese prosecutors have closed the case book on Sagawa.

The public does appear to be losing interest in the case, with the result that Mr Miyazawa's popularity is on the rise, from the depths of 12 per cent at the height of the scandal to around 20 per cent.

Faction heads such as Mr Mitsuzuka are fortunate that new political groups are struggling to get funds from recession-hit Japanese companies, while an imperial wedding scheduled for June has provided a welcome distraction from scandal.

In professing his enthusiasm for political reform, Mr Mitsuzuka said the country's multi-seat constituencies were the cause of Sagawa-like scandals and should be replaced by a single-seat system similar to that of Britain.

Yet a cheaper political system would undermine the power of patronage that comes from running a faction and dividing up constituencies with other faction heads.

Mr Mitsuzuka admits that political reform may "hurt me personally", but change is necessary because "politics is a public thing and we must think of the next generation". But he has also suggested in recent days that the reforms need not be introduced rapidly.

Both Mr Mitsuzuka and Mr Michio Watanabe, the foreign minister and the other likely candidate for the leadership, have hinted that Mr Miyazawa may run for a second term as prime minister when his term expires in



Likely candidates: Hiroshi Mitsuzuka (left) and Michio Watanabe

September. Yet Mr Miyazawa often appears to lack confidence and has been considered an uninspiring leader at a time of political and economic crisis.

Not that Mr Watanabe or Mr Mitsuzuka will necessarily provide enough inspiration to ensure the longer-term survival of the old order, but the collapse late last year of the Takeshita faction, then the largest, has left them at the helm of the party's destiny.

The health of Mr Watanabe has been questioned while Mr Mitsuzuka argues that his experience as a foreign and trade minister qualify him to handle a tense trade relationship with the US. He said yesterday that "it is no surprise" that bilateral tension has risen with the coming of a new US president, since Mr Bill Clinton had campaigned on economic issues and Japan appears to be one of those areas.

But Mr Mitsuzuka will need to work to erase a popular perception that his faction is "right wing" and, perhaps, not the best to be presiding over a sensitive debate on a wider role for the Japanese military. And he is thought by some colleagues to lack the negotiating skills necessary to active international role.

Having prospered so far from the upheaval within the LDP, the newly-confident Mr Mitsuzuka quoted Mr Mikhail Gorbachev. In assessing the need for further change in Japan, he said, those who do not respond "adequately" will be "left behind by the flow of history".

secure the passage of important legislation.

Mr Mitsuzuka can claim credit for being the first Japanese leader to caution the Chinese government over its military build-up. During a visit to Beijing late last year he expressed concern over plans to expand naval offensive capacity and the rapid upgrading of technology by the People's Liberation Army.

"We are not too accommodating towards China. I tell the Chinese at every opportunity that it is not in their interests to have the world against them on the issue of human rights," he said.

On the debate over the so-called "peace clause", Article Nine of the constitution, which renounces the use of force to settle disputes, Mr Mitsuzuka said changing the constitution, technically, was a very simple matter. "All we have to do is add a new section to the existing Article Nine explaining that a United Nations request would override that clause."

However, he acknowledged that winning public support for such a change is a "delicate problem". He suggested that 80 per cent public approval will be needed before the constitution is changed, or added to before Japan can take a more active international role.

Having prospered so far from the upheaval within the LDP, the newly-confident Mr Mitsuzuka quoted Mr Mikhail Gorbachev. In assessing the need for further change in Japan, he said, those who do not respond "adequately" will be "left behind by the flow of history".

Tokyo likely to cut discount rate to 2.5%

By Charles Leadbeater
In Tokyo

THE Bank of Japan is expected to cut its official discount rate

today after its governor, Mr Yasushi Mieno, said yesterday there was a need to support an economy which had fallen into a worse-than-expected condition.

The bank's policy-making board is expected to decide to cut official interest rates from 3.25 per cent to 2.5 per cent, the low that interest rates reached during the peak of the bubble economy between 1987 and 1989.

The move would mark the bank's acceptance that the downturn in the economy has spread well beyond the real estate and financial services sectors badly hit by the bubble's collapse. Mr Mieno said there were growing signs small businesses in regions not affected by the bubble were also being hit.

The cut would be the sixth in the official discount rate since September 1991 when it stood at 6 per cent. Mr Mieno, known as a tough financial disciplinarian, has come under mounting political and business pressure to deliver the cut. The last 0.5 percentage point reduction was six months ago. Since then

the economy has fallen close to outright recession.

However, employers' leaders yesterday signalled that they did not believe the historic low of 2.5 per cent was sacrosanct. Mr Takeshi Nagano, president of the Japan Federation of Employers' Associations said that the authorities should consider a seventh cut if the economy failed to recover.

The expected reduction helped to strengthen the Tokyo stock market yesterday. The Nikkei average rose to a high of 17,119 before falling back to close 35.7 points up at 17,073 after traders took profits.

Speculation about the cut also helped to revive the trading volume, which has been in the doldrums for weeks.

Money market rates for three-month certificates of deposit fell to a record low of 3.25 per cent, while the yield on the 10-year benchmark bonds rose 6 basis points to 4.34.

An interest rate reduction would immediately benefit Japan's commercial banks, which will see their profit margins expand because the cost of borrowing money from the central bank will become cheaper. A cut might also help to stimulate consumption of larger items such as cars.

Soweto violence in dispute over taxis

ANGRY taxi drivers yesterday stoned buses and attacked bus drivers in Soweto, South Africa's biggest black township, and police were trying to stop the protest spreading into central Johannesburg. Reuter reports from Johannesburg. Two people have been killed and dozens injured in running battles between police and the protesting taxi drivers in the South African commercial capital, which was declared an unrest area on Tuesday night.

The drivers allege that they are constantly harassed by police and are demanding government subsidies.

Cabinet shuffle in Algeria

Algeria yesterday dropped its veteran foreign minister, Mr Lakhdar Ibrahim, and three others in a cabinet reshuffle. Reuter reports from Algiers.

Mr Ibrahim was replaced by Mr Redha Malek, a member of the collective presidency, and said to be an acquaintance of the US secretary of state, Mr Warren Christopher.

Germany sells 39 navy ships

Germany has sold Indonesia 39 navy ships from the stocks of the former East Germany, government officials said yesterday. Reuter reports from Bonn. Officials, who declined to be named, said that the ships were mainly mine-sweepers and patrol boats.

Kabul clashes as UN retreats

Guerrillas bombarded Kabul with rockets yesterday, killing 14 people, as mediators tried to negotiate a peace between President Burhanuddin Rabbani and the fundamentalist leader, Mr Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Reuter reports from Kabul.

The UN said it had withdrawn staff from Jalalabad and Kandahar a day after gunmen ambushed and killed three UN staff and a Dutch consultant.

Somalia faces security curbs

The UN is discussing plans that will give a multinational force in Somalia greater powers to enforce law and order and a ceasefire, a UN official said. Reuter reports from Mogadishu. He said the discussions, mainly on the role of the Somalia mission, expected to come under UN command later this year, involved the secretary-general, Mr Boutros Boutros Ghali and the Security Council.

Consular cuts

The Philippines said it will close 12 consulates and nine of the country's 60 embassies, as a cost-cutting measure, AP reports from Manila.

GOVERNMENT ACCUSED OF COVER-UP

Kuwaitis seek end to secrecy on fraud probe

By Mark Nicholson in Cairo

KUWAITI parliamentarians and journalists said yesterday they would defy a ban imposed by the Gulf state's public prosecutor on issuing any unsanctioned information concerning alleged fraud in the management of Kuwait's overseas investments and at the state-owned Kuwait Oil Tankers Company.

Mr Mohammed al-Banai, who is leading the government's investigations into the two affairs, announced the ban on Monday, into a torrent of criticism that he was party to a government cover-up. He forbade any public statement on either matter without his written permission.

Members of the opposition-dominated national assembly said yesterday parliament would study the ban to see if it was constitutional. But Mr Hamad al-Jouan, who chairs the assembly's legislative committee, said the prohibition in his view was "against the law as I know it". He added: "For my part I will say whatever I know about these things - it is in the public interest and the interests of Kuwait."

The ban also angered local journalists, who have enjoyed considerable freedom since the end of the Gulf war and have been allowed in making public disclosures into alleged corruption at KOTC. Many said the ban was an attempt by the government to block potentially embarrassing revelations.

Mr Ghanim al-Najjar, a columnist at al-Watan newspaper, said: "The press is a vital force in opening this issue up. Without the press, investigations by the government would not have reached this stage."

The curb muddies the government's stated intention not to obstruct parliamentary or press freedom in connection with the investigations, which are the focus of considerable interest in the Gulf state.

Sheikh Saud Nasser al-Sabah, the information minister, said last week that Kuwait's press was entirely free and that the government would give an "open door" to the media. The assembly's legislative committee, said the prohibition in his view was "against the law as I know it". He added: "For my part I will say whatever I know about these things - it is in the public interest and the interests of Kuwait."

Mr al-Banai has refused any comment on his investigations into the Kuwait Investment Office's lossmaking Spanish

partner, Torras, is appealing the decision.



Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten arriving at hospital yesterday in the colony, where he underwent a 2½-hour operation, under local anaesthetic, to clear narrowed coronary arteries. Reuter reports from Hong Kong. Doctors predicted a rapid recovery. The governor would remain in hospital for two or three days and then rest at home for a week, his spokesman said.

Seoul sees easing of relations with North

By John Burton in Seoul

THE South Korean government predicted yesterday that its tense relations with North Korea will ease later this year.

Progress in inter-Korean relations has been blocked for the past year by Pyongyang's refusal to allow Seoul to make challenge inspections of suspected nuclear weapon facilities.

South Korea and the US will also resume their suspended annual "Team Spirit" military exercise in March in an effort to force Pyongyang to make a concession. North Korea has responded by breaking off talks on nuclear inspections and other issues with Seoul.

North Korea has also recently made attempts to improve relations with Japan and the US to attract foreign investment.

issue said yesterday that North Korea would ease its stance once the exercises were over because of the need to revive its troubled economy. Seoul estimates that the North Korean economy contracted by 5 per cent in 1992 due to an oil shortage that is hampering industrial production.

In spite of the political stalemate between the two Koreas, Mr Kim Dal Hyon, the North Korean deputy prime minister, met executives of several big South Korean conglomerates, including Samsung, Daewoo and Lucky-Goldstar, in Beijing two months ago to discuss investment in North Korea.

North Korea has also recently made attempts to improve relations with Japan and the US to attract foreign investment.

Belgium decides to pull out paratroops

BELGIUM yesterday decided to start withdrawing its paratroops from Congo's Brazzaville by the weekend, after most Belgians who wanted to flee the violence in the Zairean capital Kinshasa had already been evacuated, AP reports from Brussels.

The government has decided to start the retreat of its troops in Brazzaville on Friday, a government spokesman said.

He said that 600 Belgians remained in Kinshasa after 864 had been repatriated with government help in the wake of the riots that swept the city this week.

Heavy weapons fire erupted late on Tuesday and tracer rounds could be seen over Kinshasa's skyline, but no information was available on the circumstances.

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Nunn flexes his muscles but keeps his cool

By Jurek Martin

SENATOR Sam Nunn was in a commanding mood on television yesterday morning. He said of President Bill Clinton: "I admire him greatly, I think he's going to be a terrific leader." They might disagree on the admission of homosexuals to the US military but the views on both sides were "sincerely held" and there ought to be no spill of animosity into other important issues. "Contrary," he added, "to what you may have read." For Mr Clinton, this was a useful olive branch from a

fellow-Democrat who has emerged as his first and biggest opponent in Washington. Mr Nunn made clear that he would oppose any Republican attempts to codify the existing ban on homosexuals by tagging an amendment to this effect on to the popular family leave bill.

Later in the morning he voted in the Senate.

But what the senator from Georgia, chairman of the armed services committee, gives can also take away.

He had enough to say yesterday to serve as warning to the president not to commit the

cardinal sin - which is failure to consult.

Joint protestations to the contrary, there are many in Washington who do think bad blood exists between the senator and the president. Mr Nunn, a proud man and sometimes dour, is assumed to have harboured presidential ambitions of his own, now damped down by the arrival of another southerner Democrat in the White House.

He was never the warmest supporter of Mr Clinton during the presidential election last year, absenting himself from the campaign in his home state at the height of the Jennifer Flowers affair last spring. In the early summer, when Mr Clinton was running third behind President George Bush and Mr Ross Perot in the polls, Mr Nunn did not exactly discourage speculation that he might be available as a compromise candidate.

Mr Clinton has a long political memory. His preference for Congressman Les Aspin over Mr Nunn for the post of secretary of defence in the new administration may well have been influenced by presumed slights from the senator, as well as by knowledge of the

difficulties he might have with Mr Nunn in the Pentagon over gays in the military and the more pressing questions of defence budget cuts and reorganising the armed services.

Mr Nunn's views on both issues - and his close relationship with General Colin Powell, head of the joint chiefs of staff and a formidable political operator in his own right - will still create problems for the president in the months ahead.

Yesterday, Mr Nunn was more inclined to change the subject, commanding Mr Clinton's renewed focus on economic and social living adjustments.

Even on the issue of gays in the military, on which his committee is to hold hearings soon, he was warned: "I may take into account things I have not yet thought about." In the present mood, that is about as much as Mr Clinton could have expected.

Clinton set for first legislative victory

Swift passage likely for family leave bill

By Jurek Martin

THE FAMILY leave bill yesterday began what looked like a rapid passage through both houses of Congress as Republican attempts to modify and amend it failed to muster sufficient votes.

The bill, twice vetoed by former President George Bush, would require companies with more than 50 employees to provide up to 12 weeks' unpaid leave for family exigencies, such as illness of a relative and childbirth.

In the morning, the Senate rejected by 57 votes to 33 - wider than the 57-43 Democratic majority - the alternative Republican proposal to institute tax credits to companies to cover the cost of family leave. The House was due to take up the measure later and Mr Richard Gephardt, the Democratic leader, predicted easy passage.

Senate Republicans also confirmed yesterday morning to force a vote on the controversial question of retaining the ban on homosexuals in the military, a move designed to preempt President Bill Clinton's order for a six-month review of that strike was an early landmark of his first term.

The president's press secretary also confirmed what had been the case since Monday that the regular daily briefings would no longer be televised live, though exceptions would be made on special occasions. The practice was unpopular with many White House correspondents and did not always serve either the media or the chief spokesman, Mr George Stephanopoulos, in the most favourable light.

Finally, and also predictably, the Senate intelligence committee yesterday unanimously approved the nomination of Mr James Woolsey to be the next head of the CIA. A full Senate vote is expected today.

Passage of the bill would provide President Clinton with his first legislative victory, though it would hardly classify as a momentous one and would serve as no guide to the far tougher battles to come on economic and social policy.

Finaly, and also predictably, the Senate intelligence committee yesterday unanimously approved the nomination of Mr James Woolsey to be the next head of the CIA. A full Senate vote is expected today.



Roberta Achtenberg (above), an openly-lesbian politician, has been nominated by President Clinton as assistant secretary for fair housing and equal opportunity at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Reuter reports. She has been an active advocate of housing for homeless or low-income people and championed many homosexual and civil rights issues.

Senate report attacks drug company pricing

By Paul Abrahams
in London and George
Graham in Washington

A SENATE committee claimed yesterday the drug industry had broken its promise to restrain price increases voluntarily. The Senate ageing committee cited a report suggesting that eight of the top 31 drug groups had increased prices at more than three times the inflation rate last year.

The study, whose methodology was challenged by the US

Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, also claimed 19 groups had increased prices at double the rate of inflation.

Senator David Pryor of Arkansas, a Democrat and the committee's chairman, said the report showed drug price inflation had been consistently higher than the general rate of inflation.

He claimed it showed drug companies had failed to fulfil promises that they would limit price increases. Voluntary price restraints were clearly

not working, he added.

The eight companies mentioned were Merck, Pfizer, Marion Merrell Dow, Du Pont Merck and Sterling-Winthrop of the US, as well as the American arms of Glaxo and ICI of the UK and Hoffman-La Roche of Switzerland.

Mr Pryor said a drug costing \$1 in the US would cost 67 cents in Canada and 60 cents in Europe.

The report claimed Glaxo's US arm had increased prices by 44 per cent during 1992.

This was contested by the company which said its overall increase for the year to June 30 had been 1.8 per cent, well below the 3 per cent general inflation rate.

Glaxo said the study had failed to consider the issues of volume and discounts. It was important to look at the units sold of each drug as well as list prices.

Du Pont Merck claimed its increases had been less than 2.5 per cent on a weighted average basis. Merck said it

had increased prices by 3.1 per cent and by 2.9 per cent if rebates and discounts were included. That compared with the report's alleged increase of 5.5 per cent.

Pfizer claimed its increases last year were less than 2 per cent, while ICI said its drugs price inflation had been 3.6 per cent on a volume-weighted basis and 2.1 per cent after deducting rebates.

Price gouging by pharmaceutical companies has been a favourite theme of Mr Pryor's

since he took over as chairman of the Senate special committee on ageing in 1988.

President Bill Clinton's campaign manifesto promises to eliminate tax breaks for pharmaceutical companies that raise prices more quickly than personal incomes, and to encourage them from spending more on marketing than on research and development.

It is unclear, however, how these pledges will be integrated in the overall reform of the US health-care system.

Independents win seats but no power

Fujimori consolidates grip on Peru's institutions, writes Sally Bowen

THREE years ago television presenter Ricardo Belmont was elected mayor of Lima, heralding a period of turmoil for Peru's traditional political parties and marking the emergence of the independent candidate.

Last Friday's national municipal elections not only saw Mr Belmont comfortably re-elected but confirmed the political trend he initiated in 1989.

Independents swept into office across the country. In Lima, home to a third of the nation's voters, established parties picked up only half-a-dozen of 40 council seats. Former president Fernando Belaunde's Popular Action party and ex-president Alan García's Aprista party were reduced to a handful of regional strongholds.

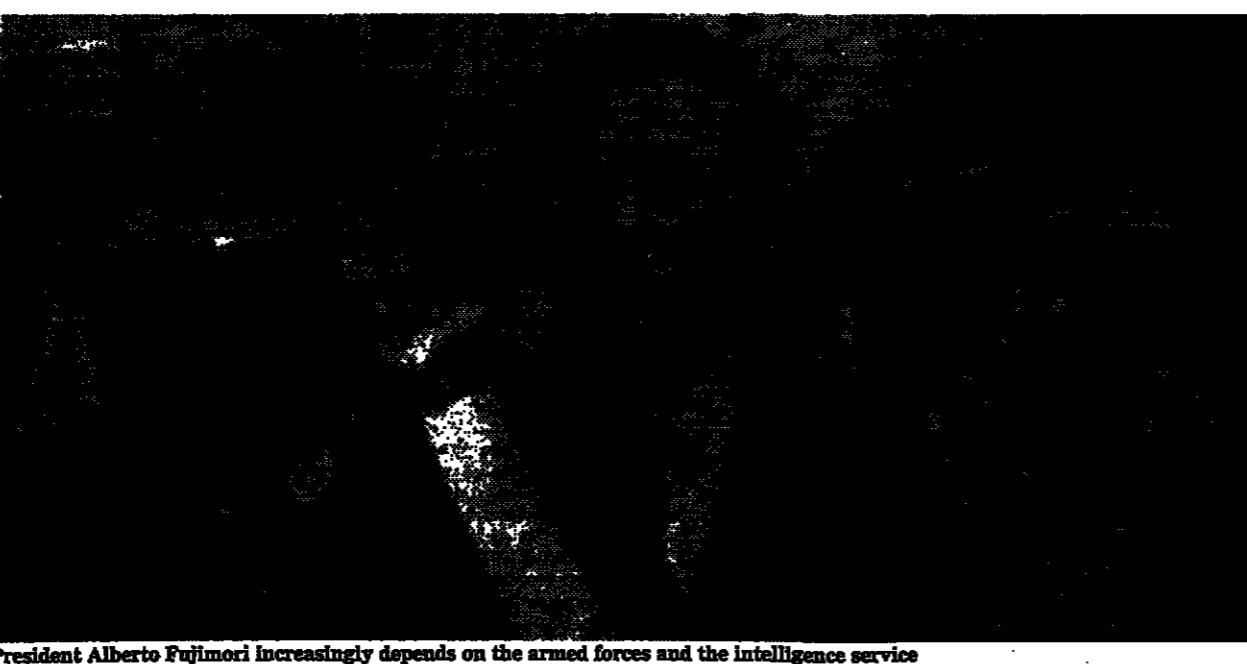
Both had boycotted November Congressional elections in protest against President Alberto Fujimori's seizure of power last April. Also, the Marxist left suffered a crushing national defeat.

The elections were good news for Peru in two respects. First, the level of political violence was comparatively reduced. Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) guerrillas, their organisation weakened since last September's capture of their leader Abimael Guzman, threatened voters and killed 20 candidates in the run-up to polling.

But, compared to 1988, when elections were postponed in a quarter of the country because of guerrilla violence, Friday's voting was largely peaceful.

Second, these municipal elections fulfil the pledge made by Mr Fujimori to the Organisation of American States last May of a full return to democracy. OAS observers appear satisfied with the process.

In theory, the way should now be clear for friendly countries to re-establish flows of economic assistance frozen in



President Alberto Fujimori increasingly depends on the armed forces and the intelligence service

in the wake of Mr Fujimori's institutional coup.

But Mr Jorge Camet, the new economy minister, cancelled his trip to Washington this week for talks with Peru's new support group. Peru needs \$450m to cover a 1992 balance of payments deficit.

Without it, the letter of intent presented to the International Monetary Fund and arrangements with the World Bank for clearing immediate arrears would collapse, as would prospects for \$1.6m in fresh credits over the next three years through the IMF extended fund facility.

So far, the only firm commitments are from support group co-leaders Japan and the US, which together will put up half the total. Government officials hope Canada and assorted European countries will provide the remainder.

Last week's elections, however, have not dispelled international community scepticism

even though Mr Fujimori has earned praise for his speedy transformation of one of the continent's most protectionist and statist economies into one of its least regulated.

However, that economic liberalisation has been accompanied by political authoritarianism. Several countries, including Germany, expected to be a key member of the support group, remain unconvinced about adequate progress on issues such as human rights.

The US State Department recently protested over threats to press freedom and its January report on continuing human rights violations caused renewed concern.

Mr Fujimori's abrasive campaign against virtually every Peruvian institution has led to mass sackings of judges, the dismissal of tens of thousands of state employees, and the premature removal of senior army officers who might not see eye to eye with him. Three

weeks ago, the presidential axe fell upon Peru's widely-respected diplomats, causing widespread rancour.

On Tuesday, two lawyers who have acted for Shining Path leaders were convicted of treason and sentenced to life imprisonment for serving as links between their clients and the guerrilla group. Both men belonged to the Democratic Lawyers' Association.

Also, Mr Fujimori has encouraged the proliferation of the political independents who triumphed last Friday. "It's the old divide and rule strategy," commented one senior foreign diplomat in Lima.

All winners, whether former left-wingers abandoning the stigma of a party label, opportunists or decent neighbourhood workers, scrupulously eschewed ideology.

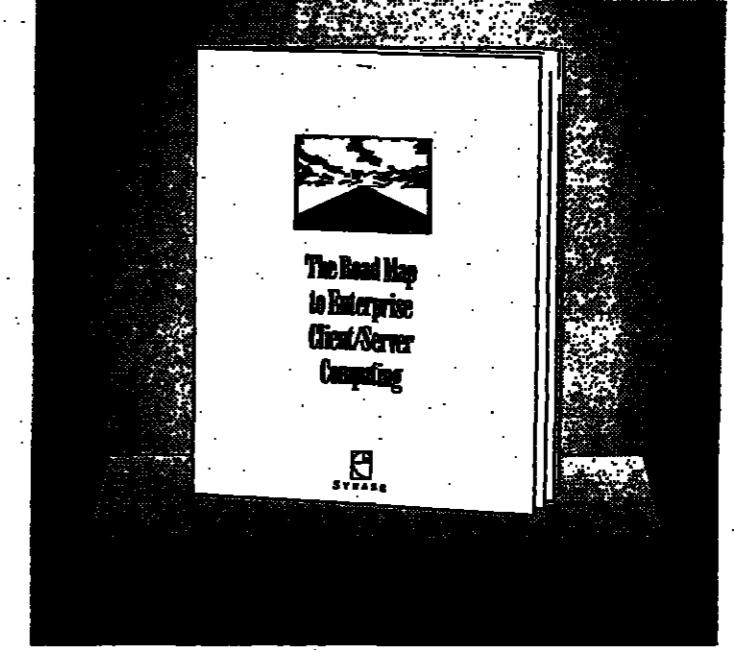
No-one in today's Peru, even the traditional parties, denies the need for political renovation. But analysts query whether hundreds of independent candidates and ballot papers whose complexity makes more invalid than valid votes constitute the "authentic democracy" Mr Fujimori had promised.

It is not about technical issues. It is not about specs.

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Leaders tackle US campaign spending spree

By George Graham
in Washington

DEMOCRATIC congressional leaders met President Bill Clinton at the White House yesterday to discuss how to reform the financing of US political campaigns by limiting the advantage in fund-raising enjoyed by incumbents.

Spending limits for congressional campaigns, curbs on contributions from political action committees (PACs) representing lobbyists, and greater disclosure requirements for lobbyists were all expected to be on the agenda.

That means that any attempt to limit spending - House and Senate races last year are estimated to have cost a total of \$504m (£333.7m) - must be voluntary. The carrot of public finance, which already exists for presidential campaigns, is therefore virtually inescapable.

US voters, however much they want candidates to stop taking money from lobbyists, appear reluctant for the government to pick up the bill. This leaves the way open for the very wealthy, such as Mr Ross Perot, the independent who financed most of his presidential campaign last year out of his own deep pocket, or Mr Michael Huffington, a California Republican who broke the congressional record by spending \$5.4m, mostly his own money, to win a House seat last year.

Harder line in Mexican change

By Damian Fraser
in Mexico City

PRESIDENT Carlos Salinas of Mexico has removed one of his new appointees in a move seen as consolidating a harder government line towards negotiations with opposition parties.

Ms Beatriz Paredes, former number two in the ruling Institutional Revolutionary party (PRI), has been ousted as under-secretary at the interior ministry and made ambassador to Cuba.

The government's claim of the change, just 17 days after installing a new team at interior, as a progressive step. An official said the president was responding to criticism that there "was excessive PRI presence in the interior ministry".

However, analysts saw the abrupt shift as further evidence of a hardening of the ministry's line against negotiations with opposition parties.

The government's claim to be concerned about maintaining the appearance of impartiality in government officials was not helped by the appointment of Mr Emilio Chuayffet as the PRI candidate to be governor of the state of Mexico.

NEWS: THE DAF CRISIS

● Optimism in the Netherlands and Belgium ● US, Japanese and European truck makers may be buyers ● UK fears job losses

Challenge for potential international buyers

By Kevin Done,
Motor Industry Correspondent

THE world's truck makers are accustomed to lurching from feast to famine, but as the industry heads into one of its leanest periods on record, any potential buyer for Daf - or parts of it - will have to ponder hard before taking the plunge.

There are attractions, however. It has a highly regarded pan-European distribution network with about 1,300 sales and service outlets. Access to such a distribution system would be highly valued by any truck producer seeking to enter the European market from outside the region.

Daf has a share of close to 8

per cent of the west European truck market, which puts it in sixth place, but it is in the UK where it has established a commanding presence since its takeover of Leyland Vehicles in 1987.

Truck makers such as Renault Vehicles Industrielles of France and MAN of Germany have struggled to establish themselves in the UK market, and their shares of less than 5 per cent each, are easily overshadowed by the 25 per cent of the market captured by Daf last year.

As recently as 1989 the UK was the biggest truck market in Europe and acquisition of the Daf share could prove strategically attractive as the UK market gradually pulls out of

its deepest recession since the Second World War.

At the same time, Daf has a relatively modern truck range with some substantial investments in new products completed in the past two years. In 1992 it began the launch of a new range of medium-heavy duty trucks, the 75/85 series, which were the result of a big investment programme worth more than £170m and followed four years of design and development work.

Daf's operations in the UK represent a mixed challenge for any potential buyer. The plant at Leyland, Lancashire, is relatively modern, produces a competitive range of light-duty trucks and has a large potential capacity. It could offer an attractive, low-cost

production base in Europe, in particular for producers with a high cost base in Germany. By contrast, the van operations in Birmingham appear much more at risk. The plant, formerly British Leyland's Freight Rover van operation, is old and the product range is also rather out-dated despite efforts to revamp it and success in improving quality.

The future of the van plant is most clearly in question. Daf had entered a joint venture with Renault of France three years ago to develop a new van range for the mid-1990s. About 50 Renault engineers are working in Birmingham and the two companies have a joint venture company, Van Tech, formed to develop the

new product. Renault said yesterday it was studying the "repercussions" on the van project of Daf's move to file for protection from its creditors. Privately, Renault has been well aware of Daf's growing financial crisis and has been seeking to prepare contingency plans.

Its options are to abandon the project, seek another partner or go it alone. Of these paths, Renault appears to prefer finding another partner, but in any eventuality it appears unlikely that the new van will ever be built in Birmingham - placing a grave question over its future and the livelihoods of the 2,000 Daf workers in Birmingham.

To find a rescuer for the

truck operations Daf is most likely to look outside Europe. Paccar, the US producer, showed a strong interest in a possible deal with Leyland Vehicles when British Leyland was seeking to shed the truck and van operations in 1986/87, before the merger was finally agreed with Daf.

Daf's well-developed pan-European distribution network and its expertise in particular in heavy trucks could also provide the entry ticket to Europe for one of the leading Japanese producers, Hino (Toyota), Nissan Diesel, Mitsubishi or Isuzu. The Japanese producers also have profitability problems of their own at present, however, and the timing of Daf's demise is far from ideal.

British unions fear for plants

By Robert Taylor,
Labour Correspondent

BRITAIN'S union leaders fear that Leyland-Daf's plants in the UK will be sacrificed to save its production facilities on the continent. Last night they accused the British government of collusion in the collapse of Leyland-Daf.

Mr Tony Woodley, national auto industry secretary of the Transport and General Workers, said he had "reliable information" that a new company was being established with financial backing from the Dutch and Belgian governments to save Daf's plants on the continent and leave the British operations "to swing in the wind".

He said that Belgian and Dutch employees of Leyland-Daf were being told their jobs will either be safeguarded or they will receive attractive redundancy packages, thanks to the intervention of their governments. The company denied the accusation last night but Mr Woodley said he was standing by his claim.

"The government must now surely change its indifferent attitude to the fate of the Leyland-Daf operations in Britain", added Mr Woodley. "It must invest the resources necessary to give our workers the same chance as those in Belgium and Holland to prove they can produce world-beating trucks and vans."

Britain's union leaders are demanding an early meeting with the receivers - Arthur Andersen - at Leyland-Daf to discuss ways of saving all its UK plants from permanent closure.

Mr Derek Bullen, works convenor at Daf's Leyland plant said that after meeting a representative of the receiver he "had the feeling" that a viable plan would be brought forward to keep the plant open.

"My first impressions are that he does not appear to want to come in and shut things down," he said.

Union officials are pressing Mr Michael Heseltine, trade and industry minister, to intervene. "Heseltine invented the word intervention but he does not seem to know how to do it. He has to intervene to help or we will see thousands of layoffs," said Mr John Allen, national official of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union.

Mr Heseltine said yesterday the government was "ready to work closely" with the company, the receivers, the banks and other interested parties "to mitigate as far as possible the impact on UK jobs". But he ruled out any loans or subsidy to keep the Daf plants open.

National officials of all four unions at Leyland-Daf are due to meet this morning to co-ordinate their response to the crisis at Daf. Some believe the Leyland truck plant - one of the most modern in Europe - will be saved but the rest of the UK operations will be shut down.

They point to the serious knock-on effect of the liquidation of Daf's plants. The Transport and General Workers union estimates that at least 15,000 jobs could be lost - with 10,000 in supply firms - if all Leyland-Daf plants close, saying this would cost £87m in redundancy payoffs.

Daf workers at its Leyland plant are planning a lobby of parliament, petitions and marches to save their jobs. "We have got to keep the pressure up. We have fought many battles before to save factories from closure. What we need now is a real awareness in the community here that we are on the brink of going under," said Mr Ian Hayes, chairman of the white-collar unions at the plant.

sonnel manager at Westerlo, said that production had not been stopped, but he added: "It may be that we have to take that decision in the following days, because we could be short of components."

Some 200 Westerlo employees demonstrated at the Antwerp office of ABN Amro, the Dutch bank which leads Daf's banking consortium, in the hope of persuading the consortium to grant the emergency short-term funding needed to shore up the ailing vehicle-maker.

A number of workers said they would continue a sit-in at the Antwerp office until the bank's Amsterdam headquarters replied to their demands.

Mr De Backer said yesterday that his staff were not angry with the Daf management but were arguing "about the decisions taken above our heads".

He added: "It's the financial people who are deciding about our future at the moment."

Payments agreed by leading bankers

By Robert Peston

BRITISH BANKERS yesterday travelled in groups to an emergency meeting of Daf's bank creditors held in Amsterdam.

"It's a question of safety in numbers", said one banker. "We don't want to be mugged outside the meeting by angry employees".

By the middle of yesterday afternoon, they had agreed to provide Daf with £160m, which they hope will be sufficient to pay wages and meet the company's other trading expenses for a month.

During that time the receivers of Daf's European businesses will review the long-term prospects of the company's operations.

Total indebtedness of the company is in excess of £13bn. However, there is a vast difference in quality between different elements in the debt.

The loans most at risk are the £190m which banks have lent to the manufacturing operations. Of this, approximately £180m has been provided by a consortium of nine banks, led by the Dutch bank, ABN Amro and also including Rabobank of the Netherlands, Générale de Banque of Belgium, Crédit Lyonnais of France and three US banks, Barclays, Lloyds and National Westminster.

The syndicated loan, in its current form, was signed in June of last year, and is to a certain extent covered by collateral held on the bank's behalf by a Dutch trust or sticking.

The scale of losses faced by these banks can be gauged by examining the sacrifices which Daf had been asking them to make, as part of its vain attempt to earlier this week to save itself from receivership.

Under the rescue plan, which Daf put together with the management consultant firm, AD Little, and the accountants, Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte, the banking syndicate was being asked to provide £150m in a short term bridging loan, at least a further £100m in further loans over the coming two or three years and was also being asked to convert £100m of debt in equity.

Other creditors in the firing line are the investment banking arms of the Dutch government and the Flemish regional government, which last December provided loans to of £67m and BFr2.2bn respectively.

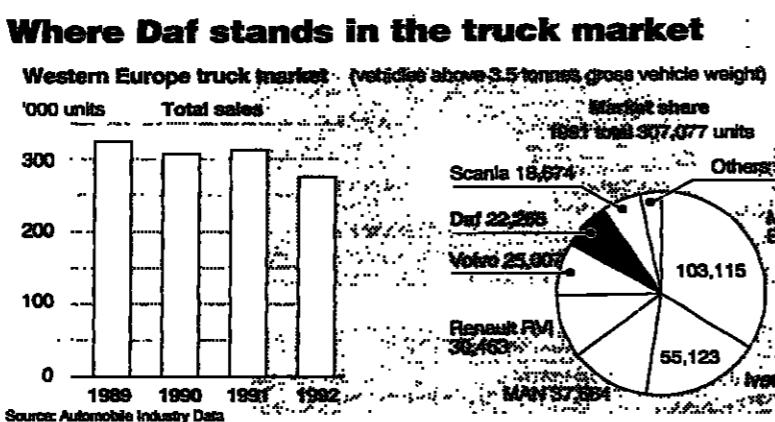
Under the rescue plan, holders of preference shares and of £150m in bonds would also have been asked to convert part of what they are owed into ordinary shares.

However, the bulk of Daf's debt, more than £12bn, is believed to be less at risk. These are loans made to Daf's finance subsidiaries, which lease Daf's vehicles to customers.

Daf's ability to pay these loans does not depend directly on the health of its manufacturing operations. So long as finance company customers, who are users of Daf vehicles, continue to make lease and instalment credit payments, then Daf's finance companies should be able to make bank payments.

Part of the finance company bank debts, some £180m, was securitised and sold in the form of bonds to institutional investors by UBS Phillips & Drew, the securities firm, last December.

Standard & Poor's, the US credit rating agency, said yesterday that it was monitoring the situation but saw no reason to consider lowering the top triple-A rating accorded the bonds.



Fresh blow for member of Major's inner circle

By Philip Stephens,
Political Editor

IT TOOK Mr Michael Heseltine's predecessor at the department of trade and industry a matter of weeks to learn the perils of the job.

After a number of near-misses Mr Peter Lilley instructed his private office to create a file marked simply "Impending Disasters". He hoped it would provide early-warning of the next, inevitable, catastrophe to hit one of the most accident-prone departments in Whitehall.

Mr Michael Heseltine has not told us whether he kept the file open when he moved across to the DTI last year.

But either way it would not have saved him from the political fall-out from the threatened collapse of Leyland-Daf. In the

political parlance of Westminster, the fiasco over the government's coal closure programme was a blunder, the financial problems of the truck maker an accident.

The difference has done little to soften the damaging impact on Mr Michael Heseltine's reputation. Six months ago he was one of the strongest figures in Mr Major's cabinet, a member of the inner circle trusted to pull the hottest coals from the political fire.

It is not only the Labour party that has been reminding Mr Heseltine of his promise at last October's party conference to intervene "before breakfast, lunch and dinner" to support British industry. Right-wing

Tories who bear a grudge over his destruction of Mrs Margaret Thatcher's premiership are gleeful about his inability

to match the words with deeds. In fact Mr Heseltine's brand of industrial intervention was never directed at bailing out companies like Leyland-Daf. But his enemies are happy to blur the distinction between policy designed to promote industrial innovations and one directed at propping up lame-

ducks. For his part the president of the board of trade has been asked to look battle-wearied, leaving his colleagues wondering whether he is any longer interested in the day-to-day grind of politics.

It is much too early though to write off a man who has proved one of the most resolute politicians of his generation. Leyland-Daf has delivered another blow. But Mr Heseltine learnt long ago to roll with the punches of politics.

RSA grants are for individual investment projects with strict criteria. The plant must be located in an assisted area; it must be commercially viable; it must need assistance to go

London's position over subsidy remains complex

By Tony Jackson

SINCE THE collapse of Daf was announced on Tuesday, the UK government has been adamant that the company cannot be helped from public funds. The true position may be slightly more complex.

The official position is that government aid of any sort would be disallowed by Brussels, particularly in an industry with such a history of competitive subsidy as motors.

According to the Department of Industry, the only allowable source of funds is regional grants - technically, regional selective assistance, or RSA.

RSA grants are for individual investment projects with strict criteria. The plant must be located in an assisted area; it must be commercially viable; it must need assistance to go

ahead with the project; the project must contribute to the regional and national economy; and it must either create jobs or safeguard them.

Daf's Leyland plant qualifies on most criteria. However, as Mr Michael Heseltine, trade and industry secretary, told the House of Commons on Tuesday, Daf applied for £450m of such assistance just before the general election last April. It was told it could only have £18m, and did not pursue the idea.

Mr Heseltine also told MPs: "Were there to be a request for short-term working capital... such a request could be put to my department by a myriad of different companies in the motor industry and many others."

The European truck industry has received assistance from

Andersen firm is UK receiver

By Andrew Jack

THE accountants appointed as "administrative receivers" to Daf's principal UK subsidiaries have three months under UK insolvency law to hold a creditors' meeting.

According to Mr Keith Otter, a principal with accountants Coopers & Lybrand, the Dutch procedure - surcharge van betaling or suspension of payments, gives the two court-appointed "bewindvoerder" officials between one and three months to call a meeting of creditors with restructuring proposals. In Belgium, the court has eight days to decide whether to grant a "concordat judiciaire", which would lead to the appointment of a juicommisario to oversee the preparation of proposals for a creditors' meeting.

They may well be able to hold a number of the trading companies together and sell them as operating businesses either before or after that time. But unusually, their appointment was made not by an individual bank or banks, but by a Dutch trust or sticking, a body vehicle which held the security on the loans used by the syndicate of international banks making loans to Daf.

The receivership is not affected by the jurisdiction of the courts in the Netherlands, where the Daf holding company is based, or by those in Belgium. The management is applying for protection from creditors in both countries.

In practice, the receivers are

likely to work closely with their counterparts in these countries to consider a sale which might involve businesses operating in more than one of them.

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The appointment of the British receivers prevents any creditors being able to launch separate legal proceedings to seize the company's assets and recover outstanding debts. They have assigned a number of other accountants and insolvency specialists from the firm to take control of the management of three UK operating companies on six UK sites.

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British unions fear for plants

GMB in pact with German trade union

By David Goodhart, Labour Editor

A FURTHER step towards Anglo-German labour co-operation was signalled yesterday when the GMB general union signed a partnership agreement with I G Chemie, the German chemical industry and paper union.

The agreement, signed in the shadow of the Anglo-French row about the transfer of jobs from Hoover from France to Scotland, follows similar co-operation agreements between the engineering and printing unions in the two countries. It covers exchanges of information and personnel, joint seminars and language courses to be funded by the EC.

Mr John Edmonds, the GMB leader, denied that closer co-operation between unions obviated the need for formal European works councils in which EC multinational companies would be obliged to regularly consult with worker representatives from all EC plants.

He said that inter-union co-operation allowed for "crisis management" but suggested that the Hoover dispute would have been easier to handle if the company had been forced to discuss its plans at an earlier date with a

European works council.

Union officials in Brussels say that the Hoover case is likely to mean that the eleven countries, minus Britain, which have signed up to the Maastricht social chapter will give a higher priority to passing a directive on European works councils. Hitherto, France, which has been the main inspiration behind the EC's social dimension has shown little interest in the councils.

Mr Hermann Rappe, leader of I G Chemie, said that European unions realised that it was not sensible to harmonise wages or non-wage labour costs across Europe but working conditions, like working time or holidays, could be covered by EC-wide agreements.

Mr Edmonds said that he hoped the agreement with I G Chemie would lead to joint collective bargaining with companies like ICI which employ a large number of people in Britain and Germany.

The Hoover episode was "exactly the sort of problem that has bedevilled European unions. Because there was no adequate information going to the unions the company was confident that it could keep the workforce divided and make its decision without consultation".

Spring seeks Unionist meeting

By Ralph Atkins

MR DICK Spring, Ireland's foreign minister, yesterday said he wanted to meet Northern Ireland's Unionist leaders about their demands for constitutional change.

He stopped short of promising that changes would be put to an Irish referendum if agreement could be reached on political arrangements in the north.

"At this stage I don't think we want to get bogged down over 'could be' or 'would be'." He said it was important for dialogue to open but his invitations are unlikely to be accepted by Unionist leaders.

Mr Spring also emphasised setting out a lengthy programme of work for the regular Anglo-Irish conferences, held under the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement and opposed by Unionists because of the role they give Dublin in the affairs of the north.

That probably reflected an expectation in London and Dublin that talks will not resume until after May's local elections in the province, which have already begun to provoke inter-party rivalries.

Helicopter contract announced

By David White, Defence Correspondent

THE Ministry of Defence opened a contest to supply the army with about 100 attack helicopters expected to be worth around £1.5bn - announcing that companies were being invited to tender for the contract.

Three UK companies - Westland, British Aerospace and GEC-Marconi - are pitted against each other in the competition, all promoting foreign helicopters for the army role.

Westland is linked with McDonnell Douglas of the US in an attempt to place the latter's successful Apache helicopter, strongly favoured by the army but regarded as possibly an expensive option.

Its rivals are the Cobra

Venom, a tailor-made version of the AH-1 Super Cobra, in which GEC is associated with the US manufacturer Bell Helicopter, and the Tiger, a new helicopter being developed by Eurocopter. Eurocopter has joined forces with BAEs to tender for the UK contract.

An outside challenge comes from the Kamov Ka-50 Wewewolf, a single-seat seat Russian helicopter being promoted by a Geneva-based concern, Group Vector.

Mr Malcolm Rifkind, defence secretary, announced the cancellation of two regional mergers and the reprieve of 3,000 uniformed jobs.

But it is always harder for the Conservatives to come to terms with Britain's waning influence.

Long search for a place in the world

MPs are uncertain about Britain's future role in international politics, writes Philip Stephens

Ask any group of Conservative MPs about Britain's place in the world and the competing cross-currents of opinion surface within minutes.

First comes a surprisingly pragmatic realism appropriate to middle-ranking European power in the 1990s. Applied most obviously to Bosnia but also to Saddam Hussein's Iraq, it states with certainty that Britain must no longer aspire to the role of world policeman.

Its stretched armed forces have a part to play in humanitarian aid efforts in the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere. But British soldiers are too scarce and too precious to be cast in the dangerous role of peace-makers.

So successive debates in the House of Commons have left the government in no doubt that its supporters would not tolerate the risk of significant casualties in a Balkans conflict seen as tangential to British interests.

Unquestioning support on the backbenches for military action against Iraq has given way to questions over whether it serves a strategic purpose.

But then comes the second, more familiar, strand of opinion. It is rooted in Tory nostalgia for empire. Britain is placed still centre-stage, interpreting its national interest in the context of a much wider international order.

It is a current that abhors the tameness of those most recently Mr Warren Christopher - who raise questions about whether Britain deserves still its seat at the top table in institutions such as the UN. It is one that has persuaded many Tory MPs that the cuts in the armed forces mapped out by the government for a post-Cold War world went too far.

The peace dividend promised by Options for Change, the government's review of the armed forces, no longer looks quite so attractive when the government is obliged to admit that it could not have found a few hundred troops to send to Somalia. Britain must retain at least the option of reinforcing

diplomacy with military might.

The Tories are not alone with their uncertainties. The Labour party has yet to fashion a coherent foreign policy

from the ashes of last year's election defeat. The Europeanism which Mr Neil Kinnock put at the centre of Labour's strategy has been undermined by its subsequent record on the Maastricht treaty. The election of President Bill Clinton has led some to flirt again with Atlanticism. What is left is confusion.

Commonwealth - confronting international disorder.

He foreshadowed yesterday's reprieve of two army regiments by arguing that Britain should spend more on its diplomatic service and be ready to shave less from its defence budget.

But it must recognise also its diminishing economic power by saying No more often than Yes to new entanglements.

The speech won plaudits as a typically eloquent contribution. But it was more convincing in its diagnosis than its prescription. It provided also only a fleeting glimpse of the most uncertain dimension of British foreign policy.

With it will go one of the principal props which have allowed Britain to punch above its weight in the world.

The cross-currents then would not simply be between those remaining hopes that Britain might cling on for a while longer to the illusions of empire or whether it must accept with dignity a modest role on the world stage.

The Conservatives would face also the choice they most fear: between Europeanism and Atlanticism.

Britain in brief



Alcohol abuse costs industry £2bn a year

Employees who refuse to accept counselling for drink problems are increasingly likely to face the sack, the charity Alcohol Concern said as it released results of a survey on alcohol in the workplace.

Alcohol abuse costs UK industry at least £2bn a year, according to the Centre for Health Economics at the University of York. This figure takes into account the cost of sickness absence, unemployment and premature death, but excludes other social and National Health Service costs.

More than 40 per cent of the

Interest rates fuelling M0

Britain's narrow measure of money supply, M0, grew by a seasonally-adjusted 4.1 per cent in the year to January, narrowly exceeding the target range set by the Treasury, for the first time since July 1990.

But the government did not draw any special conclusions from the increase for the conduct of monetary policy because it was not matched by any similar growth in retail sales and because of divergent trends among other monetary indicators, including M4, its broad money measure, and bank and building society lending.

The Treasury said low interest rates could be encouraging higher cash holdings and so fueling the growth of M0.

Dan Air pilots submit claim

Former Dan Air pilots, dismissed at the time of the British

Airways take-over of DanAir, are to submit their claim of unfair dismissal to an industrial tribunal today as a preliminary to possible High Court action for breach of contract.

Some 175 of the 300 pilots dismissed last November have formed an action group to fight their claim.

Charities fear lottery squeeze

Some of Britain's leading charities, on the eve of the House of Commons committee stage of the National Lottery Bill, warned that failure to amend the legislation could leave them "squeezed out of existence".

With MPs due to begin detailed discussions of the bill - which should enable a national lottery to start by the end of 1994 - an intense lobbying campaign is underway to force changes.

Charity operators claim that the lottery could reduce their own annual lottery income of about £235m a year by £100m.

Jobs cuts 'vital for survival'

HarperCollins, the Glasgow-based publisher, issued redundancy notices to 256 book manufacturing staff out of a total workforce of 1,300.

The company, part of Mr Rupert Murdoch's media empire, said the job cuts were "vital" for long-term survival.

Ipswich-based Eastern Electricity said it would shed 200 jobs. Two 24-hour customer service centres would be established at Bedford and Rayleigh in Essex, replacing 10 offices scattered around its area.

Fewer failures

The number of companies entering administration and receivership last month fell to 374, part of a downward trend over the past 10 months, according to figures processed by Touche Ross from the London and Edinburgh Gazettes. There were 385 in December.

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TECHNOLOGY

On a desert island, a man stretches out his hand and picks up a telephone receiver. He dials his access codes, his voice is soon beaming up to a satellite, then back down to earth, allowing him to talk to anyone, anywhere in the world. This is the sort of image that satellite telephone companies are trying to sell to international investors and regulators. Information brochures for these companies are strewn with exotic images of potential users from desert nomads to dark-suited business men. So far, however, their best-known role has been in the desert sands of the Middle East during the Gulf War, when journalists on the move used them to get the news out.

Satellite telephones could revolutionise communications in much the same way that cellular phones did a few years ago. Since cellular phones send their signals through earthbound transmitters, they are limited in their reach.

With satellite communications, however, phone calls could be placed and received anywhere on earth, from the North Pole to Tahiti, or from the top of Mount Everest to a boat in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

Before this dream becomes a reality, though, companies will have to overcome two hurdles. First, they will have to win a battle against exorbitant costs, and second, they will have to win over concerned regulators.

Six US companies have already committed themselves to the creation of satellite telephone systems: Constellation Communications; Ellipsat (a unit of Mobile Communications holding company); Loral Qualcomm satellite services, part of Loral; Iridium, a unit of Motorola; TRW Space and Electronics Group; and American Mobile Satellite (AMS), owned by McCaw, Hughes and MTEL.

In addition to telephone services, most of these companies plan to use the satellite communication system to provide data services, inter-computer communication and radio tracking. AMS already has a satellite system in operation. However, it only has a few hundred subscribers and covers US territory. The other companies, with more ambitious plans for world-wide service, hope to be in full operation by 1996-98.

The estimated costs of setting up shop, though, are high. Each group will spend a minimum of between \$500m (£331m) and \$4bn for the installation of their systems. "This is an extremely expensive and risky business," one satellite telephone executive explained. "A lot of these plans exist only on the drawing board, and when you're just in the development stage it's hard to have

Satellite phones could transform communications once prices come down to earth, writes Victoria Griffith

You'll never be alone again



a full understanding of your cost structure."

The most expensive items are the satellites themselves. The telephone satellite companies have put forth proposals for a mind-boggling array of systems, or "constellations" as they are referred to in the industry jargon.

One of the few points of agreement seems to be that the low earth orbiting satellites (Leos), which orbit at a range of 450 to 6,000 nautical miles, are generally preferable to the higher orbit geo-stationary satellites (Geos), which orbit at a height of about 12,000 nautical miles. Only AMS uses a geo-stationary system, mainly because it applied for a licence while the technology for Leos was not fully developed.

"The development of lower orbit satellites is exciting and has made the proposals for telephone satellite systems more viable," said Bruce Franca, deputy chief engineer with the Federal Communications Commission.

mission, the main US governmental body regulating the new companies.

Leos do carry some disadvantages. They have a relatively short life span, often four to five years, compared with 10 to 12 years for Geos. They are also far less powerful, so many more of them are needed to do the job. While AMS operates with a single, rented geo-stationary satellite, Motorola, for instance, has applied for a 66-satellite constellation system. Although more Leos are required to do the job, they do offer economies of scale.

"As the satellites are churned out in an assembly line-like process, the cost goes down," said John Windolph, a Motorola spokesman. Because they are smaller and lighter, Leos are also cheaper to make and cheaper to launch. Analysts say Leos may also help to lessen the telephone voice delay which can occur if the transmission has to travel too far from earth.

Because the signals have to travel less distance, Leos also render land-based booster systems unnecessary, and allow users to carry lighter and cheaper portable equipment. But the telephone satellite groups have very different ideas about how far out they want to go, while still operating in the Leos range. TRW, for instance, plans to operate its satellites towards the outer limit of Leos orbits.

According to Edward Nowacki, vice president and general manager of the TRW Federal Systems Division, satellites orbiting closer to earth spend more time in the earth's shadow. Because the satellites are solar-powered, this shortens their life span. "Another problem is that they get cold without the sun's rays and this applies additional stress," says Nowacki.

Constitution, on the other hand, constellate on extremely low-range orbits of 550 miles, which it says is a low-density height. "The higher the density, the more particles floating around and the more radiation

shielding you have to put on the satellite," says Ron Lepkowski, consultant to the group. Ellipsat rejected the idea of a steady, circular orbit altogether.

"With a circular orbit, you tend to get significant amounts of communications capability where you can't use it, like at the North Pole," said John Naughton, vice-president in charge of engineering at the company. "With an elliptical orbit, we can pull the satellite in closer to the places which would have the heaviest traffic, and let the satellite spin out in other, low-demand spots."

One other important advantage of the Leos is that they require a smaller spectrum range. With governments around the world worried about overcrowded radio space, this may give the lower-orbiting constellations a strong hand with regulators.

To operate fully world-wide, the telephone satellite companies will have to obtain approval from local governments, as well as international regulatory bodies such as the International Telecommunications Union. To facilitate their application for spectrum space, most of the companies have accepted the idea of a multiple access system, which would allow all the companies to operate along the same spectrum.

The companies would share the band by providing their users with different access codes. "With multiple access, all of us could operate on such a wide band that we would become almost invisible to each other," said Douglas Dwyre, president of Global Star, which is a division of Loral. "By sharing the same band, it throws the question of spectrum share back on the market, since whoever has the most business occupies most of spectrum."

Motorola, however, is pushing hard to be allocated its own individual band. "If we're all sharing the same spectrum, the chance for interference is too great," said Windolph. Many regulators, including the FCC, say they are anxious to co-operate with the telephone satellite groups, which could provide an important consumer service.

The companies themselves are busy negotiating joint ventures with telephone operators around the world in an effort to win local rights to satellite usage. Despite the problems, these groups are determined to have their constellations up and running in the next few years.

If they continue to attract the necessary investment funds, they will probably succeed. Industry estimates are for a possible 10m satellite telephone subscribers by the year 2005, and usage costs for satellite communications are anticipated as being just slightly above current cellular rates.

Fast-talking computer shows its strength

Jonathan Constant reports on a powerful translation system

Language barriers are set to tumble with the advent of powerful technology which allows messages to be sent between personal computers anywhere in the world and instantly translated en route.

European scientists have harnessed the power of parallel processing, where up to 256 computers can work alongside each other, to achieve previously unheard-of speed and accuracy of translation.

The method is so quick that 200 pages of text in most languages can be translated in 20 minutes - a task which previously took eight hours on the best systems. Experts predict that better programming will make it even faster.

For brief messages sent electronically around the world, the operation is almost instantaneous. Even complex documents only take a few minutes to translate.

The work being carried out by Bull of France, Siemens of Germany, and ICL of the UK, is part of an EC research programme known as Esprit. It is at the test stage, but products could be on the market by 1994-95.

By scanning print directly into the computer, the system will operate at half the cost of a human translator and 35 per cent quicker, believes Bill O'Riordan, ICL's manager of research and advanced technology.

Accuracy has been a problem in the past because of the complexity of the task - colloquialisms, cultural differences and context are just some of the elements that must be taken into account.

"The Archbishop is ready for dinner," for instance, gives no clues as to whether he is waiting for his evening meal or has been captured by hungry cannibals.

People are still needed to edit the results, but parallel processing has enabled far more sophisticated programming, says O'Riordan, taking computers well

beyond clumsy word-for-word translation. "I tried to trick it with 'I think a thought'. The computer analysed this and came back with 'I think of an idea'."

O'Riordan believes the greatest demand will be for manuals and technical papers, especially from manufacturing industry which is expected to account for more than 55 per cent of computer translation in the next few years.

Professional translators have yet to discover the benefits of the new technology. "At the moment we don't use machine translation because it takes too long to correct the mistakes it is still quicker if we do it ourselves," says Emma Wagner, head of the EC's English translation unit in Luxembourg.

Jane Mountford of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting in London still feels there is no substitute for the traditional approach.

"Computers will not replace human translators. They are a tool and if they take some of the hard graft out of our work they will be welcome," she says.

EC translators currently use a vast multilingual computer dictionary called Eurodic, and many sectors of industry also rely on technical language databases to aid translation of specialist papers. One of the largest is a medical dictionary with 230,000 terms in Japanese and 180,000 in English.

Bob Kowalski, a professor at Imperial College London, has succeeded in disentangling the jargon from a parliamentary paper - the British Nationalities Act. The result is straightforward, logical language that is legally accurate, and comprehensible to both computers and the person in the street.

The next few years will see science fiction become fact. O'Riordan predicts that computers will soon cross the ultimate barrier by translating speech, with simultaneous interpreting at conferences achieved within just five years.

PEOPLE

Reducing Ladbroke's property exposure

Cyril Stein, chairman of Ladbroke Group, is handing over the chairmanship of Ladbroke Group Properties, its property division, to John Anderson, its managing director. Anderson is also joining the main board of Ladbroke.

Anderson (right), aged 44, is an accountant who has worked for Ladbroke since 1971. He joined the property division in 1979, becoming finance director in 1988 and managing director in February 1991.

Ladbroke says Anderson will continue to report to Stein on property matters, although he



In Ladbroke's last full year, which was 1991, the property division made a loss of £12.4m after write-downs against fall-in values. In the first six months of 1992, losses deepened to £14.8m in the property division.

CRT, the consultancy, recruitment and training group which on Monday announced pre-tax profits reduced from £2.61m to £689,000, has appointed John Robinson to replace Sir Douglas Hague as non-executive chairman, with effect from February 1.

Sir Douglas said his priorities had been to look for a chairman with "larger quoted plc experience" and to lift the number of non-executives to three, a process begun with the appointment of Ron Yearsley in September.

Robinson is currently chairman of Sterry Communications, and was previously managing director of Electrocomponents for five years, during which period pre-tax profits grew from £22m to £52m.

In addition, the management is to be strengthened further by the promotion of Barrie Clark, currently group finance director, to chief operating officer. He will make the move when a replacement to run the finance department can be found.



Given that the drugs industry has traditionally been dominated by men, Linda Kelly's career has been unusually impressive.

Bristol-Myers Squibb, the US healthcare group and tenth largest in the UK, yesterday announced that Kelly had been given control of all British drugs operations. Previously sales and marketing director, she has been appointed general manager of UK pharmaceuticals after only 14 months with the company.

Kelly, 38, will report directly to Michael Loberg, president north Europe, who has responsibility for UK operations since Gary Noon left the group in November 1991 to join Wellcome. She previously held senior marketing positions at Merck of the US and Smith Kline Beecham, the Anglo-American group. Her previous position is being split into two, but the replacements have not yet been announced.

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- 2 Employed
- 3 Consultant
- 4 Retired
- 5 Student/Unemployed

Nature of Business

- 1 Financial Services
- 2 Construction
- 3 Other Services
- 4 Transport/Travel/Communications

- 6 Extraction (Oil, minerals, etc)
- 7 Manufacturing/Engineering
- 99 Other (Please State _____)

Age

- 1 Under 25
- 2 25-34
- 3 35-44
- 4 45-54
- 5 55-64
- 6 65+

Types of investment currently held

- 2 International Equities
- 3 Offshore Deposits
- 4 Property
- 5 Bonds
- 6 Precious Metals/Gems
- 7 Unit Trusts/Mutual Funds
- 8 Other International Investments
- 99 None

Which of the following do you have?

200

MANAGEMENT: MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

Two-card trick from Visa

Barbara Harrison on the credit card company's motives in sponsoring the city of Atlanta

In an unusual marketing deal, Visa looks set to become the official credit card of the city of Atlanta, Georgia. Barring a last-minute political upset the agreement, for more than \$4m (£2.6m) over four years, will be finalised next week. Already it is being hailed by city officials as a marketing milestone.

They and Visa executives predict that it will be widely imitated by many other cities and companies. But the partnership has critics, who wonder how far the city's rampant commercialism may go. Will Tylenol's manufacturers market the pain reliever as the city's official headache remedy?

Maybe. If they become a sponsor of the 1996 Olympics, which will be held in Atlanta, Visa, which is already an Olympic sponsor, says it

there are limits to such marketing alliances. He would draw the line at firearms and sexually-oriented products, for example.

His main targets are the 1996 Olympic sponsors, though he says he would not rule out partnerships with other companies. This suggestion has some in the business community worried that the city is extracting "protection" money from their Olympics sponsorships.

Nonetheless, companies appear to be lining up to pay. Babbitt says he is currently negotiating with three more companies and expects to sign similar marketing deals soon.

From Visa's standpoint, the deal protects the company's impending Olympic sponsorship, but also wins it plaudits as a good corporate citizen. Although a large slice of its fees will go to the Atlanta Convention and Tourism Bureau to market the city worldwide (with Visa's logo on the materials), the remainder of the money goes to general city expenses like park improvements, and police

and teacher salaries.

The eagerness of other cities to become part of corporate marketing campaigns is unclear. Greg Longini, assistant commissioner for planning and development in Chicago, where the opening game of the 1994 World Cup soccer contest will be played, says that the idea might have merit. But he cautioned: "Before the city became a partner in a corporate marketing campaign, we'd have to look very, very carefully."

One sensitivity he noted was that a marketing deal should not tread on the toes of a city's existing investors.

In essence, if McDonald's has a corporate presence in your city (as is the case with Chicago), you cannot sign a deal with Burger King.

The Atlanta Chamber of Commerce has worried aloud about the potentially harmful effects of the Visa deal on economic development.

The chamber, which leads Atlanta's promotional efforts to recruit investors, is concerned that the city's alliance with Visa could preclude investment by other credit card companies.

Under Atlanta's deal with Visa, other credit card companies will be excluded from placing their ads around the airport or from otherwise diminishing the exclusivity of Visa's sponsorship.

Babbitt admits, however, that



Luxury for everyone

Gary Mead on the mass-marketing of exclusive brands

The German motor manufacturer BMW grew powerful not just by producing an excellent range of cars; careful nurturing of the BMW brand image also helped, making BMW owners feel they were members of an exclusive club.

But times are changing. BMW is now running press advertising in the UK which features a gleaming BMW bonnet accompanied by the slogan: "It's just like a £60,000 BMW, only £50,000 less." By stressing value-for-money as much as status, BMW is tinkering – at what risk is difficult to assess so far – with that important intangible, brand image.

Another luxury German car producer, Mercedes, has decided to take a similar route. Last week its chief executive designate, Helmut Werner, announced that the company plans to transform itself from "a car manufacturer with a long tradition in the luxury class" into "an exclusive full-line manufacturer offering high-quality vehicles in all segments of the market".

Once it starts producing smaller, cheaper vehicles, though, will Mercedes also dilute its brand reputation? Not necessarily. Some luxury

goods producers have successfully pinned their premium label on cheaper goods, without losing their consumer appeal.

In 1978, Cartier launched its "Les Must de Cartier" brand of trinkets aimed at the mid-market purchaser. The range proved successful, helping Cartier achieve annual growth of 25 per cent in the 1980s, and in 1991 contributing more than half of the company's SF11.5bn (£200m) sales.

Jean-Louis Dumas-Hermès followed suit in 1978, bringing out cheaper items with the same Hermès badge as is attached to considerably more expensive items; sales have since grown ninefold, to FF2.4bn (£300m).

Some analysts, though, attribute the relative decline of luxury brand names to an undisciplined extension of the branding to a plethora of products, at one point, for instance, the name Gucci could be found on 14,000 different products, arguably diluting beyond repair a once exclusive name.

In the 1970s General Mills extended a sporting status symbol of the time, the Lacoste alligator, into a widened clothing market; sales started to sharply decline in 1982, which may have been due

to a dilution of the luxury brand.

But brand-stretching of those sorts of luxury goods does not provide the best marketing analogy for what Mercedes is about to attempt.

Purchasers of luxury personal accessories are not, on the whole, looking for utility as well as social status from their purchase; nor have the likes of Dunhill, Cartier or Hermès truly attempted to become mass-marketers.

Whereas these companies were

simply seeking to boost profits at the margin, Mercedes is arguably engaged in a more fundamental fight for survival. In the car world, where technological distinctions are becoming increasingly narrow, price-plus-quality is becoming a marketing must.

Werner said that Mercedes was in danger of being priced out of world markets if it stuck only with its luxury models which were "over-engineered".

Like BMW, Mercedes is starting its mass-marketing from an enviable position of brand strength. The trick is to produce cars for the common person without also becoming

the symbol of the consumer. Just another box-pusher. After all, far worse than damaging a brand, perhaps, is to see it die altogether.

Regional bank bucks the trend

By Michael Cassell

Most of the UK's big high-street banks may be taking the knife to their branch networks – but not all.

Yorkshire Bank, whose Australian ownership is not permitted to obscure its home, northern flavour, underlined how it is successfully bucking the trend with the opening of its 270th branch at Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, last week.

Yorkshire cannot claim to have completely escaped the storm of political criticism directed at banks. But it sees the present wave of ill-feeling more as a market opportunity than a problem.

Far from drowning up a novel strategy for the times, however, its tactics seem to be to play on its traditional strengths while the others flounder.

In terms of products, Yorkshire cannot claim to be much different from its larger competitors. Its emphasis has been on carving out for itself a different brand image, consolidating its position as a regional bank – though its branches now stretch from Gateshead to Slough – and of winning business from customers who are simply fed up with its rivals.

Yorkshire took a close look at the promotional activities of its competitors last year and found that customers were unimpressed with the stark contrast between expensive advertising imagery and actual delivery. It believed the service its own network delivered was, if anything, running ahead of its image.

With personal and small-to-medium-sized business accounts as its main target, Yorkshire is increasingly making a virtue of its size and parochialism. It claims of friendliness and approachability seemed to be supported recently when it was voted best overall bank for customer satisfaction by "Which?", the UK consumer magazine.

While insisting that it will not necessarily pick up accounts other banks consider too risky, Yorkshire maintains that the greater autonomy and discretion given to its managers guarantees a more considered, sympathetic approach.

Not everyone, however, is impressed. Christopher Cartwright, the owner of a small but

long-established graphic design company who responded to Yorkshire's well-publicised desire to help small businessmen, says he got a sympathetic hearing – and a polite refusal.

"So much for a different approach," says Cartwright.

Not content with welcoming suitable refugees from other banks, Yorkshire also has a keen eye for the empty high-street properties vacated by its shrinking competitors.

The bank has moved into branch premises vacated by competitors in such towns as Macclesfield, St Albans, Reading and Slough, though it remains fussy. It turned up its nose at every branch on a long list of properties put on the market by Midland Bank.

Expansion is undertaken steadily, advancing into new, adjacent areas only when the bank's local presence has been established. With a large chunk of the country now covered, attention is primarily concentrated on expanding within existing areas, rather than on reaching new regional markets.

There are around 70 locations on the bank's expansion list, although only three new branches are projected to open this year. At around 250,000 a time, no one wants to get the next location wrong.

So far, Yorkshire claims it has never been forced to close down a branch, most of which become profitable in about three years.

Yorkshire does have some things in common with its larger counterparts – apart from its recently reported 1992 losses. It shares the view that branches will increasingly take on the appearance of other high-street shops, with the majority of space given to customers, rather than staff.

The Hemel Hempstead branch, with its spacious banking hall, is a sign of things to come. Steve Harrison is far too thrilled with his first manager's post to complain about his own, windowless box at the back of the building. In any case, he intends to spend most of his time on the road seeing customers: "If I'm sitting in here I'm not making any money," he grins.

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four and one-half hours to just under three. It's good for the Swedish railways. Passenger traffic is up 20 percent.

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Joel is 10

ARTS

In Louis Malle's *Damage* the main characters could be refugees from a game of Cluedo. Married British MP Jeremy Irons - let us call him Mr Grey - falls dangerously in love with ambassador's daughter Juliette Binoche, let us call her Miss Black. (The hat, high-heeled shoes and knock-em-dead stockings are all in midnight monochrome.) Since Miss Black is Mr Grey's son's girlfriend and prospective bride, neither son (Rupert Graves) nor mother (Miranda Richardson) must know. All goes well - or as well as you'd expect between an ageing Minister and beautiful Anglo-French girl can go until Madame Marigold-Yellow (Leslie Caron) blows in. She is Miss Black's mother, come from South America to pour trouble on oiled waters.

A few reels later: death. Weapon, a bunch of keys. Place, a house in West London. Victim and culprit - for me to know and you to learn.

Damage is scripted by David Hare from the novel by Josephine Hart and has the screaming orderliness of Hare's best film *Wetherby*. At first the sense of neat board-game melodramatics seems constricting. We have seen these moves before, haven't we? Not least in Losey-Pinter's 1967 *Accident*: perm Irons and Graves into Dirk Bogarde and Michael York and then add an interchangeable French-accented homesweat.

But Hare and Malle make a more brutalist, 1980s partnership and an ultimately brilliant film. In *Accident* the Britain burst open by romantic apocalypse was the old cricket-end-dreaming spires one. *Damage* gives us an older, greyer Euro-Britain already riddled by geopolitical anxieties. Here a French film-maker and English writer can find common ground in a tale of sex, death and Brussels agriculture initiatives.

With tariff barriers crumpling, not even passion now bothers to stop at borders. In mid-film Irons is seen nervously woolgathering at an EC conference, before dashing to Paris to disturb the bed-sheets of his weekend son and mistress. Elsewhere in the film the language of sex - that gymnastic gobbledegook that unites co-linguists and excludes all foreigners - is treated at once frankly and scientifically. As Irons and Binoche grapple on carpets, on tables or in stand-up French alleyways, we recognise a human phenomenon at once stirringly visceral and arcaneously, forbiddingly ritualistic.

Damage is a psychosocial board-game, blending real emotion with a postmodern fondness for heraldic tropes. Though Miss Binoche's nymphomania is humanised by a back-history about a brother who killed himself, we know that she is really the Angel of Love and Death: a *belle dame sans merci* for the mid-life Minister. He in turn is plumper than Mr Grey, the very model of a



Juliette Binoche and Jeremy Irons: a 'belle dame sans merci' for a mid-life Minister in 'Damage'

Film/Nigel Andrews

A board-game of sex and death

modern Major generalist, though Jeremy Irons gives him so many sad and witty shadings that the particular grows from the prototypical.

Malle, with cameraman Peter Biziou and designer Brian Morris, creates a visual style that sets off the movie's even more telling ambivalences. Hints of hyperbole - in the stately piles of Irons's social circle, in the stark angles and colours of Binoche's neo-Art Deco flat - are softened by humanist lighting. And even the character who seems most unbendingly iconic, Miranda Richardson pale and enamelled-of-feature as Irons's wife, is allowed a scarilying scene at the close: a breakdown played at if all the wellbehaved misery of Britain had at last been allowed its voice and revenge.

"Why are you doing this?" someone asks *The Public Eye's* news-photographer hero on catching him in *flagrante delicto*. "It's what I do, that's all" comes back chattering Leon Bernstein (Joe Pesci). The movie's "Berny" is based on real-life 1940s photographer "Weegee", who earned his name from his ouija-like powers of getting to murder scenes before the police and almost before the murderers.

Exchanges like this - terse, hardbodied, pseudo-profound - proliferate in this solo directing debut by Howard Franklin, who co-directed the Bill Murray comedy *Quick Change* and scripted the Ridley Scott thriller *Someone To Watch Over Me*.

The Public Eye is like a daff

compoete of both. There are bits of film noir romance/suspense,

as lumpen-paparazzo Pesci courts glistening nightclub owner Barbara Hershey. (Plot: she is being blackmailed by the Mafia.) And there are bits - better bits - of caustic knockout as Pesci performs his quick-change moments of criminal history. Student photo-journalists, please note the skill with which he cuts out a "dog-collar" from an old shirttail, turning into a

way to a showdown between families, he is there to catch the bloodbath on camera. It sounds schematic and, oh dear, it is. Through the retro-noir images move the plot pawns. Poor Miss Hershey looks as if her daily call-sheets read "Come dressed as Gene Tierney or Barbara Stanwyck" and only Pesci, resembling an overfed penguin in a mac, cracks out lines with some of the animal venom he found for *GoodFellas*. Franklin directs like a man divided: it is as if he is holding up a photo of what a "stylish" film should be like with one hand, cranking the camera with the other, and nervously glancing between the two as dramatic life drains away.

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According to cinema from the Antipodes - see *My Brilliant Career*, *The Getting Of Wisdom*, *Celia*, *Flirting* etc. etc. - growing up is a fulltime occupation. Adults are those over-size eccentrics who loom in from side of screen, wielding a Bible or cane or rolling pin. Children are those hoy truants who forever wander the gilded beach or outback seeking and finding lost Edens.

The End Of The Golden Weather is the recipe before. But as directed by Ian Mune from a stage play by Bruce Mason, it has such charm you tuck in eagerly. We are on a stretch of New Zealand coast with cliffs like layer cake. The usual grown-ups hover round the side of the narrative banquet table - fierce Dad, dimpling Mum, doity aunts and uncles - while 12-year-old Geoff (Stephen Fulford) sits in the middle. Also jockeying for

space are Geoff's mentally defective pal Firpo (Stephen Papps), who wants to be an Olympic runner, and the real Olympic runners who interrupt their beach training to rag Firpo something rotten.

Nothing and everything happens. Indeed the film is best when pursuing the sublimely marginal: like the night of disastrous Christmas theatricals by Geoff and his young sister and brother. Despite moments of here-we-go-again Antipodean archness - need there be quite so many shots of gorgeous beach and sunset-golden rollers? - this is a film about finding good to be alive which makes us feel good to be alive.

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priest to crash a wounded crook's ambulance.

Wit, though, is slowly pushed aside by portentous wisdom. As well as likable clown our Berny must be a misunderstood artist; he snags of poverty or urban violence dismissed as "too sensational" by publishers he approaches to print them in book form. So sent back into the streets, he decides to show them how sensational life *really* is. Following a Mafia black-market intrigue all the

way to a showdown between families, he is there to catch the bloodbath on camera. It sounds schematic and, oh dear, it is. Through the retro-noir images move the plot pawns. Poor Miss Hershey looks as if her daily call-sheets read "Come dressed as Gene Tierney or Barbara Stanwyck" and only Pesci, resembling an overfed penguin in a mac, cracks out lines with some of the animal venom he found for *GoodFellas*. Franklin directs like a man divided: it is as if he is holding up a photo of what a "stylish" film should be like with one hand, cranking the camera with the other, and nervously glancing between the two as dramatic life drains away.

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After 30 years Alec McCowen returns to the RSC

As You Like It, Antony and Cleopatra and Tamburlaine the Great later in the year comes the interesting revivals with Tom Stoppard's *Travesties*, directed by RSC artistic director Adrian Noble, Schiller's *The Death of Wallenstein*, and a London premiere for Alan Ayckbourn's dark comedy *Wilderness*.

Travesties will also be a world premiere of *Misfits Party* written jointly by the

American playwright Richard Nelson and the Russian Alexander Gelman and set in Moscow just before the 1991 coup attempt.

Although audiences in the past year, at 80 per cent, were slightly above 1991 and the RSC will break even in the 1992-93 season, Noble is cautious in his repertoire.

The recession, an accumulated deficit of £2.5m; and the knowledge that the RSC will lose its

£700,000 a year in sponsorship from Royal Insurance after the 1993-94 season, have persuaded him to reduce the new productions at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre to four. However the Royal Shakespeare Theatre is currently undergoing a £400,000 facelift, including new seats.

A boost for the RSC has come from English Estates, which is to sponsor the regional tour of *Julius Caesar* to small venues, like sports halls. The cost will be in excess of £100,000.

Antony Thorncroft

The return of Alec McCowen, after three decades to play Prospero in *The Tempest*; Robert Stephens as Lear; Max Stafford Clark directing *The Country Wife* and Ian Judge Love's Labour's Lost; new productions of *Murder in the Cathedral* and *Goldoni's The Venetian Twins*, are among the highlights of the Royal Shakespeare Company's 1993 Stratford season, announced yesterday. There will also be a new play by David Pownall, *Elgar's Rondo*, starring Alan Ayckbourn's dark comedy *Wilderness*.

At the Barbican in London the RSC is playing safe with successful transfers from Stratford, like *The Beggar's Opera*, *Misfits Party* written jointly by the

Flint. Set: Lohengrin. Wed: Le nozze di Figaro. Next Thurs: first night of new production of Balanchine choreographies (331 1002).

FLORENCE

Teatro Comunale Sat and Tues: Evgeny Kolobov conducts Yannis Kokkos' production of Boris Godunov, with Ruggero Raimondi and Olga Borodina. Next production: Die Frau ohne Schatten opening on Feb 25 (277 9236).

THE HAGUE

Danstheater Tonight and tomorrow: Nederlands Dans Theater in choreographies by Hans van Manen, David Parsons and Jirí Kylian. Sat and Sun: Dizzexx in choreographies by Glenn van der Hoff and others. Thurs: world premiere of work by Paolo Ribeiro (360 4930). Dr Anton Phillipszak Tonight and tomorrow: Gunter Herbig conducts Hague Philharmonic Orchestra in works by Lutoslawski, Francaix and Beethoven (plus alternative programme on Sun afternoon). Mon: Netherlands Chamber Orchestra (360 9810).

LONDON

THEATRE ■ No Man's Land: Harold Pinter's 1975 play transfers from the Almeida, in the production directed by David Leveaux starring Paul Eddington and Pinter himself. Now in previews.

Press night next Tues (Comedy 071-867 1045) ■ King Lear: the Royal Court's first Shakespeare since 1980, in a hard, unglamorous production directed by Max Stafford-Clark (Royal Court 071-730 1745).

■ Richard III: Simon Russell Beale's savagely funny monster in Sam Mendes' RSC production. 071-867 1150)

■ Carousel: Joanne Riddling and Michael Hayden in the Rodgers and Hammerstein fairground musical (National Theatre 071-928 2252)

■ Artists and Admirers: Ostrovsky's funny, moving play about turn-of-the-century Russia. A RSC production directed by Phyllida Lloyd (Barbican 071-638 8891)

■ DANCE/OPERA

Covent Garden Royal Ballet: Sleeping Beauty tonight and tomorrow, plus world premiere of new David Bintley work next Thurs. Royal Opera: Edward Downes conducts Elijah Moshinsky's new production of Stiffelio on Sat and Wed, with José Carreras and Catherine Malfitano; Thomas Hampson makes his Covent Garden debut in a revival of Il barbiere di Siviglia on Mon (071-240 1066).

Coliseum ENO repertoire consists of Jonathan Miller's production of Rigoletto tonight, next Wed and Fri, The Turn of the Screw with Valerie Masterson and Philip Langridge tomorrow and Carmen with Sally Burgess on Sat, next Tues, Thurs and Sat. Feb 19: new production of Don Pasquale

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071-836 3161) Sadler's Wells Birmingham Royal Ballet season runs till Feb 13 with two David Bintley story ballets. Tonight, tomorrow, Sat: Hobson's Choice. Next Tues-Sat: The Snow Queen (071-278 8916) Royal Ballet Hall Bolshoy Ballet daily except Mon till Feb 14 (071-589 8212)

■ CONCERTS

Royal Festival Hall Tonight: Yehudi Menuhin conducts RSC production of violin soloist Vadim Repin. Tomorrow: Mark Wigglesworth conducts BBCSO in Messiaen's Turangalila.

■ Sun: Boulez conducts Messiaen, Carter and Boulez. Mon: Georg Solti conducts Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in symphonies by Mendelssohn and Shostakovich. Tues and Thurs: Klaus Tennstedt conducts Haydn's Creation. Wed: Neville Marriner conducts ASMF in works by Lutoslawski, Sibelius and Dvorák (071-928 8800).

Queen Elizabeth Hall Heinrich Schiff and Alben Berg Quartet play Schubert. Tomorrow: London Chamber Orchestra plays Debussy, Mozart and Faure. Sat: Graham May performs English Heritage Orchestra in Berlioz's L'Enfance du Christ. Sun afternoon: Endellion String Quartet. Mon: Stefan Popov plays Walton's Cello Concerto. Tues: Schubert programme with Sian Edwards, Imogen Cooper and BBC Singers (071-828 8800).

Berlioz Tomorrow: Anne Sophie Mutter violin recital. Sat: Stephane Grappelli 85th birthday concert. Sun: LSO String Ensemble plays works by Bach

and Vivaldi. Tues: Polish Chamber Orchestra. Wed: James Judd conducts New Queen's Hall Orchestra with piano soloist Vladimir Ovchinnikov. Next Thurs: Kent Nagano conducts LSO. Feb 13: Igor Oistrakh. Feb 17, 18: Ute Lemper sings Weill (071-638 8891)

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He has seen the future, and it works differently



In the two dozen books which the encyclopaedic Peter Drucker has written since his first, *The End of Economic Man*, in 1939, he has dealt in various combinations with philosophy, politics, economics, ancient and modern history, sociology, science, technology and – most notably – the management of all types of organisations, from businesses to non-profit bodies and even governments.

Very occasionally, this still-fresh 53-year-old has turned his hand to integrating all these themes into one volume, in a manner rivalled by few writers over the past 50 years – and that includes the once-fashionable John Kenneth Galbraith. Yet Drucker's reputation among most "educated persons" (the object of the slightly teasing conclusion of this volume) rests just on his seminal writings about business management.

These range from classics such as *Concept of the Corporation* in 1946, through *The Practice of Management* in 1954, right up to *Innovation and Entrepreneurship* in 1985, plus the book a year he has produced since then.

With *Post-Capitalist Society*, Drucker has reverted to weaving all the threads together into a universal tapestry. For readers uninitiated in his power and range, the book should put an end to his narrow reputation. It reveals him better than ever as an acute observer of the underlying trends in each subject area, and his erudition and perspective help him knit them together persuasively.

The "post-capitalism" of his title may create unfortunate echoes of the recent flood of often half-baked writings about "post-modernism" in almost every walk of society and the arts. But it has method in it.

We have entered a "post-capitalist" era, says Drucker, in the sense that the "capitalist" society of the mid-1900s to mid-1900s was dominated by two forces: capital and labour. Now, and increasingly over the next two decades, we will move rapidly into a "knowledge" society, in which the most vital

POST-CAPITALIST SOCIETY
By Peter F. Drucker
In UK, Butterworth Heinemann £16.95. In US, HarperCollins \$25

factor of production will no longer be natural resources, capital or labour – all of which can be obtained with relative ease today – but knowledge.

By the year 2000, he predicts,

there will be no developed

country where workers making and moving goods account for more than one-sixth of the

labour force.

Instead, the two key classes of society, with a greyer line between them than there has been between capital and labour, will be knowledge workers and service workers. Drucker argues that the main economic and social challenges will be, respectively, the productivity of the former and the dignity of the latter, whose numbers will be slightly greater.

Lest his "post-capitalism"

In future, he argues, the most vital factor of production will be knowledge, not natural resources, capital or labour

should confuse the reader,

Drucker makes it clear that it

is in no way anti-capitalist in

the sense that some post-modernists, though not all, are anti-modernist. It is centred upon the free market, as the only proven economic mechanism, although some of its institutions will have to change their roles. Commercial banks, for instance, will make their money increasingly by receiving fees for information, rather than by earning a return on money.

Drucker is nothing if not eclectic. After all the torrential, over-cooked outpourings of American futurologists such as John Naisbitt and Alvin Toffler over the past decade, this slim volume makes a masterly yet more elegant and refreshing change of menu.

For all his illuminating dis-

cussion of this phenomenon, Drucker is at his most thought-provoking on the economics and productivity of knowledge, and on organisational issues such as why specialisation is almost always more effective than diversification, whether in a business or a hospital.

In an especially intriguing chapter, he points out the difficulty of quantifying knowledge, and therefore calculating a return on it. Hence, as he says, the lack of an adequate economic theory of knowledge despite the emergence of knowledge at the centre of the world's producing process.

At a more down-to-earth level, Drucker dwells at length on the need in a knowledge-intensive society to take education out of the traditional classroom and, by the use of technology, to make it available – and attractive – to people throughout their lives.

Universal "literacy" will consist not just of reading, writing and arithmetic, but also of *fully-pledged numeracy*, an understanding of science, technology and foreign languages, plus what Drucker calls "learning how to be effective as a member of an organisation". Above all, it will require better "process knowledge" – including "learning how to learn" – as distinct from traditional subject knowledge.

In order to lay the foundations of this society, Drucker argues that schools and colleges will have to become open to all ages, as well as more competitive and accountable for their performance.

If this seems too rich and indigestible a concoction to swallow, potential readers should be reassured that Drucker's sparse prose is laced with allusions not just to Socratic versus Protagorean debate (about the nature of knowledge), but also to 18th-century Sienee art, to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, to Margaret Thatcher, and even to the Girl Scouts movement.

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For all his illuminating dis-

The theme of this year's Davos World Economic Forum was "rallying all the forces for global recovery". There was a good deal of agreement on a general theme that the world needed a sustained, sound-based recovery rather than a quick fix.

There was also the theme of a world capital or savings shortage. How this could be so amid so many complaints of the lengths and depths of the recession and the calls to stimulate spending baffled me. If there is a shortage of savings one would expect interest rates to be rising and demand to be booming. Instead we see the opposite. The nearest I got to an answer was from a well-known US economist who wanted to see a rise in American savings, but not too much too soon, echoing Saint Augustine, who wanted to become virtuous, but not yet.

The European Monetary System (EMS) was a peripheral theme in the global forum. But it was extensively discussed in what British political conferences would call fringe meetings. A widespread consensus, covering Germany as well as Britain, was expressed by Mr Robin Leigh-Pemberton, the governor of the Bank of England, when he said that the EMS had to work more flexibly, "with more timely and more frequent realignments".

The former French prime minister Raymond Barre, himself a pioneer of European Community monetary arrangements, agreed that it had been a mistake to see the European exchange rate mechanism (ERM) prematurely as a *de facto* monetary union. He would have preferred a realignment earlier in 1992. He would have liked the US to have realigned downwards by a few percentage points together with Italy, Spain and Ireland while the D-Mark and the French franc should both have realigned upwards. Yet only a couple of years ago the Bundesbank was pressing for an appreciation of the D-Mark against the franc as well as other currencies.

The French government is now braced for a further speculative attack on the franc, maybe bigger than last autumn's, either in the run-up to the parliamentary elections in March, which the right-wing opposition headed by Jacques Chirac is likely to win. Some think that the pressure will be greatest during the negotiations that lead up to the next period of co-habitation between the French conservatives and

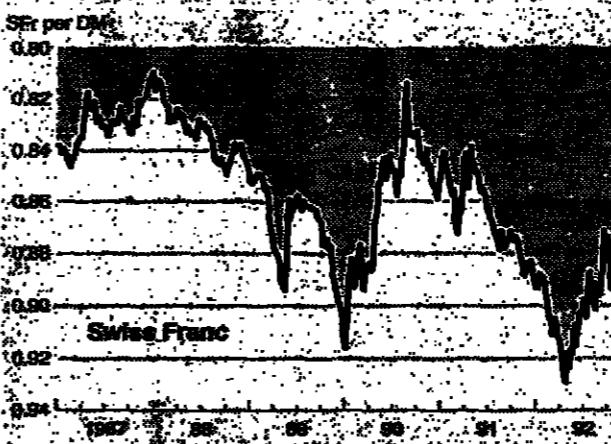
the French conservatives and

ECONOMIC VIEWPOINT

Germany fails the Maastricht test

By Samuel Brittan

The Swiss franc's shadowing



President Mitterrand.

The paradox is that on "fundamentals" the franc is in a stronger position than the D-Mark. French inflation is lower, the budget and current account balances are in better shape, and there has been a smaller drop in industrial production in the current recession. Indeed one reason why the Bundesbank is against any early fast track to monetary union among a few core countries

is that the franc is in a strong position. As for the frequent suggestion of a narrowing of the franc-D-Mark margins, the response is that there is an intellectual case for wider not narrower margins to provide flexibility. A *de facto* example is provided by Switzerland, where the national bank has in practice shadowed the D-Mark within a broad band as well as targeting the money supply, but, unlike Austria, has avoided rigid currency links. Because of expectations of a rising Swiss franc, Switzerland can now have short-term interest rates some 3 percentage points below those of Germany. (The reason why a wide margin did not work in the British case is that the central bank was regarded as too high and there was no belief in a likely upward rebound when the bottom end of the grid was reached.)

A proposal for wider margins would be thrown out politically by France and some other nations as a step away from the European goal. The Bundesbank is therefore unlikely to propose it in the current review of ERM procedure. The one argument for a franc

depreciation is the height of French short-term interest rates and the high and rising level of unemployment. French officials regard their country's unemployment as largely structural, reflecting labour market blockages which does not sit easily with the insistence of the Mitterrand government for a so-called social element in the EC.

Obviously French unemployment has been aggravated by

recession. But the increase has

not been anything like as large as in Britain and the dependence of French households and industry on short-term finance is very much less. The question for the country's leaders is whether it is worth jeopardising the credibility so painlessly won by the years of the *franc fort* policy and the political gains from the close monetary relationship with Germany for the sake of a quicker cut in interest rates.

The Bundesbank objection to

"unlimited intervention" in favour of any currency is well-known. But it may not arise because of the French policy (unlike the British last autumn) of defending the franc before the limit of the grid is reached. The hope of both the German and French sides is that a mixture of finite Bundesbank intervention, French willingness to use reserves and to introduce emergency increases in interest rates, will enable the franc to pull through until the end of March. There are strong hints that the French have undisclosed lines of credit, apart from their partners' ERM obligations. These could be either with the Bundesbank directly or through the central bank network at the Bank for International Settlements in Basle.

The hope is that such measures will put time until it is clear that a new French government supports the *franc fort*. The need for interest rate differentials against Germany could then go, in addition, German interest rates may at last be in clear decline. These influences together should be sufficient to reduce French interest rates by up to 5 percentage points, and resist the political pressures for a U-turn. The strongest force going for the franc is, however, the market belief that it is fundamentally very strong.

A Swiss banker specialising in France told me that he was switching from franc deposits into French equities. But he hesitated to move French francs into other currencies because he did not expect at worst an depreciation of more than 5 per cent and that there were many risks and costs involved, including the strong chance that the franc would soon start moving up again.

The greatest risk for the French franc is the delay in making substantial cuts in German interest rates. If questions about the strong recessionary forces in Germany, Bundesbank sources will ask why they are not showing up in the monetary numbers. They also see little sign of any other underlying turnaround in inflation.

Nevertheless the Bundesbank looks at the real economy as well as the money supply and once the symbolism of the solidarity pact with the unions, employers and Lander is in sight – Chancellor Kohl has given a deadline of February 17 – the Bundesbank will have to start reducing interest rates in earnest. But I cannot blame it for waiting until the last possible moment.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Number One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL

Fax 071 873 5938: Letters transmitted should be clearly typed and not hand written. Please set fax for finest resolution

Stability of interest rate the real need

From Mrs Rowena Mills.

Sir, Mr Norman Lamont, the chancellor, was not particularly wise in reminding us that interest rates are now at their lowest level for 15 years – viz 1978 ("UK base rates cut to 15 year low", January 27). There are all too many of us who will vividly recall that on November 23 1979 the minimum lending rate, as it was then called, was jacked up to 17.5 per cent (I was driving at the time of the announcement and nearly hit a tree), and from 17.5 per cent in May 1987 to 15 per cent in September 1989. How can the chancellor possibly fail to

PO Counters profitable

From Mr Richard Dykes.

Sir, You assert ("Parcelling up the Post Office", January 29) that Post Office Counter Services losses money. Not so. Since our company was set up as a separately managed subsidiary in 1986 we have consistently hit the profit targets set by government. Last year we made £25m, a return on capital employed of 10.5 per cent. This year we are well on course for another successful result.

Richard Dykes,
Managing Director,
Post Office Counters,
1-16 Blackfriars Road,
London SE1 9JA

Illogical to fault ICI's new deal on productivity

From Mr Keith Standing.

Sir, Your leader ("ICI pays up", January 2) on the new deal at ICI argued that the company was at fault in agreeing a substantial real increase in pay in exchange for greater productivity. This was both unfair and illogical.

Above all, companies and individuals need to be confident of long-term stability in lending rates before they go out into the market place and commit themselves to expenditure or borrowing on any significant scale.

Rowena Mills,

Chairman and Chief Executive,

Rowena Mills Associates,

Pearl Hall,

Spopton,

Bridgewater, Somerset TA5 1DA

at the forefront of negotiations which make British industry more productive, but we do this for the benefit of our members and the UK economy as a whole, not simply for the benefit of shareholders.

If we had a few more companies such as ICI we would have neither a trade deficit nor a ballooning public sector borrowing requirement. But then to achieve that we also need a government with an industrial strategy.

Keith Standing,
National Secretary GMB,
Process and Construction Sectn,
22-24 Worples Road,
London SW19 4DD

Nuclear the cheapest energy in France

From Mr Claude Mandil.

Sir, In his Personal View (January 29), Mr Malcolm Bruce mentions "subsidised French electricity". Such an allegation is wrong. Every two years a thorough assessment of the nuclear energy costs is done by a group of experts from various fields of expertise: oil, gas and coal producers, power generators and equipment manufacturers, representatives of Electricité de France and civil servants as well.

Such a conclusion remains valid even under contrasting scenarios concerning the prices of primary fuels, strong currency exchange rates and discount rate fluctuations.

The conclusions drawn from their studies have proved to be consistent with the ones obtained by experts from the most recognised international

bodies such as the OECD. Its last report, entitled "Reference Costs", which has recently been published, clearly shows that in France nuclear fuelled electricity is, for load-based periods longer than 4,000 hours a year (ie for half of the year), still the most efficient and cheapest source of energy.

Electricité de France, which operates our electric-nuclear programmes without any subsidy, is a profit-making company though its operating profits will amount to about FFr 26 (2560m) for 1992.

Claude Mandil,
Director General for Energy,
Ministry for Industry,
29 rue de Grenelle,
75353 Paris,
France

Police still face many problems in combating serious fraud

From J A McStravick.

Sir, The article by Robert Rice ("Dilemma over dealing with City cases", January 27) commanding on the working party report by the bar highlighted many of the problems faced by the authorities in combating serious fraud.

Apart from the retention of the jury, there were a number of matters in the working party's recommendations with which I could disagree.

I do not believe that the Serious Fraud Office, the Crown Prosecution Service – or indeed City regulators – are capable of deciding whether a defendant is likely to receive a custodial sentence. If offences which are investigated by the

police such as the OECD, its

last report, entitled "Reference Costs", which has recently been published, clearly shows that in France nuclear fuelled electricity is, for load-based periods longer than 4,000 hours a year (ie for half of the year), still the most efficient and cheapest source of energy.

Unfortunately, in practice the intentions of parliament have been thwarted whenever a defendant does not see fit to co-operate. Possibly as a result of the word "general", in more than one trial since the act, defendants' "statements" have

been called on the prosecution strictly to prove all of the case for the Crown. Other than being later commented upon by the judge to the jury, such compliance is not comparable.

J A McStravick,
Detective Chief Superintendent,
Company Fraud Department,
Metropolitan Police,
23 Chiswell Street,
London WC1N 3JA

SINGLE HIGHLAND MALT SCOTCH WHISKY.

GLENMORANGIE

GEORGE THOMSON. Assistant Manager.

A MILE FROM THE DISTILLERY, up a lane and along a path past a woodman's cottage, lies the tree-fringed pool that supplies Glenmorangie's water. Here George Thomson, a contemplative man, walks in all weathers to observe the level of the water which comes welling up in lazy bubbles as if puffed by a spirit below.

This water, mineral rich, purified by limestone in cool tricklings underground, derives from rain that fell at least two generations and possibly two centuries ago. George enjoys this sense of antiquity. "If we bottled the water, we could probably sell it at Christie's", he chuckles. "But it's far too valuable for that."

HANDCRAFTED BY THE SIXTEEN MEN OF TAIN.

John McStravick

FINANCIAL TIMES

Number One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL
Tel: 071-873 3000 Telex: 922186 Fax: 071-407 5700
Thursday February 4 1993

Free speech for Europe

THE EUROPEAN Commission will soon decide whether to abolish the telephone monopolies which exist in most member states. Its decision will not only be a watershed for telecommunications but will also define its overall attitude to public monopolies.

The decision will be controversial as the public consultation now at an end has shown. Ranged against full-blooded liberalisation are most of the monopolies themselves, backed by their national ministries. In favour are users and a few telephone companies, the most important being British Telecommunications, which published a powerful document on the subject this week.

It is uncertain which way the Commission will go. This is partly because the two commissioners with the biggest say — Mr Karel van Miert, in charge of competition, and Mr Martin Bangemann, in charge of industry — are both new to the sector. But the Commission should have no doubt over what to do. Not only is the economic case for full liberalisation of both services and infrastructure overwhelming. The Commission is arguably required to open the market by the Treaty of Rome's competition provisions.

Competition will bring lower prices and stimulate investment in new services. In particular, it will help Europe together by driving down cross-border tariffs which are three to six times higher than charges for calls of a similar distance in the US. Maintaining monopolies, by contrast, will undermine Europe's competi-

tiveness at a time when the US and Japan have already moved down the path of liberalisation.

The legal position is also clear. The European Court of Justice has reaffirmed that the treaty's competition provisions apply to public monopolies and that the commission has the authority to implement them. In this case — as in others concerning competition — the principle of subsidiarity cannot be used to deter commission action. If nations had local choice on whether to open up their markets, the single market would quickly fragment.

The only possible justification for retaining the monopolies would be if that was the only way social obligations, such as the provision of universal service, could be preserved. But this much-used argument has been undermined by the fact that telecommunications has been successfully liberalised elsewhere without abandoning social obligations.

It is, of course, important to ensure a level playing field so that new rivals do not simply "cherry-pick", leaving the established players handicapped with obligations. But this is perfectly feasible — for example, through a system of access charges whereby competitors contribute to social costs.

The Commission has already taken small steps down the path of liberalisation. It may now be tempted to take more half measures and phase them in over a long period. But Europe has already waited long enough and nothing less than full competition will do.

Japanese lessons

JAPANESE manufacturing companies, throughout most of the past decade, have been feared and admired in equal measures by their competitors in Europe and the US. But three years of falling profits has brought many Japanese companies down to earth. The electronics industry is becalmed; Japan's personal computer makers are facing an onslaught in their own market from US producers such as IBM, Dell and Compaq; the car makers are struggling with the depreciation costs of their huge investments which have left them with vast overcapacity in Japan.

Throughout the 1980s western companies were urged to learn many Japanese lessons. Sony and Toyota were held up as models of the lean, innovative and far-sighted companies. Western firms were urged to make production more efficient and improve quality through more flexible working practices and to emulate Japanese producers which, in cars and electronics, have developed a wider range of products with greater speed than their competitors.

But not all the sources of Japanese success in the 1980s have been properly understood, as a recent Bank of Japan report concludes. Much of the improvement in Japanese manufacturers' finances was due to the availability of cheap finance from banks and the stock market. Japanese companies' profits rose and their market valuations soared, enabling them to buy foreign companies and build plants abroad.

This cheap capital helped to mask a deterioration in performance at most companies where fixed costs rose. As the stock market has fallen, the cost of capital in Japan has risen, thereby undermining one of the main advantages of Japanese companies.

Cyprus choice

GREEK CYPRIOTS have an important decision to make next Sunday, and the Sunday after, in their two-ballot presidential election. It is to all intents and purposes a referendum on the "set of ideas" proposed by the United Nations as a basis for reunifying the island as a single state, but with two separate zones for Greeks and Turks and federal constitution. The incumbent, Mr George Vassiliou, was intimately involved in negotiating this document and is firmly committed to it. Of his two serious opponents, one, Mr Pascalis Paschalis, rejects it outright, while the other, Mr Glafcos Clerides, says it contains both good and bad, and claims that he can improve it.

The latter claim is quite unrealistic. The set of ideas, although worked out by the UN Secretariat on the basis of two years of intensive contact with both sides, has been rejected by Mr Rauf Denktas, the Turkish Cypriot leader, as giving too much to the Greeks. But it has been formally endorsed by the UN Security Council which, in a resolution passed last November, pointed its finger clearly at the Turkish Cypriot side as being responsible for the failure of repeated attempts to reach agreement, and formally called on that

when Dr Hiroshi Nakajima set himself the goal last year of being re-elected director-general of the World Health Organisation, following a Japanese custom he painted one eye on to a huge red-and-gold *papier-mâché* head. Twelve days ago he painted on the second eye to mark his victory: a second five-year term at the head of one of the largest and oldest United Nations institutions, despite being dubbed by critics the least popular director-general in its history.

"There have been many attacks on my style but I am pleased with the (election) outcome," he says, in a deadpan comment on one of the most bitter campaigns fought in the WHO. When the Japanese ornamental carp at its Geneva headquarters were found gutted on the grass one morning last summer, many assumed it was the work of his opponents. In more explicit statements, he has been accused of poor communication, autocratic tendencies and lack of leadership.

He kept his job by a decisive 18-13 margin because of support from developing countries, who make up most of the 31-strong board. They appear to believe he will be better than his rival candidate, Algeria's Mohammed Abdelloumene — who was backed by the US and Europe — at safeguarding their health programmes. Although Japan has not yet played a prominent part in international aid projects, his re-election may represent a judgement by developing countries that they can no longer rely so heavily on the European and US economies.

But just days into his new term Dr Nakajima has ordered an independent audit into alleged financial irregularities in awarding contracts to research institutes. He is also confronted by a series of difficult strategic issues now facing the organisation and by doubts that he is the right person to resolve them.

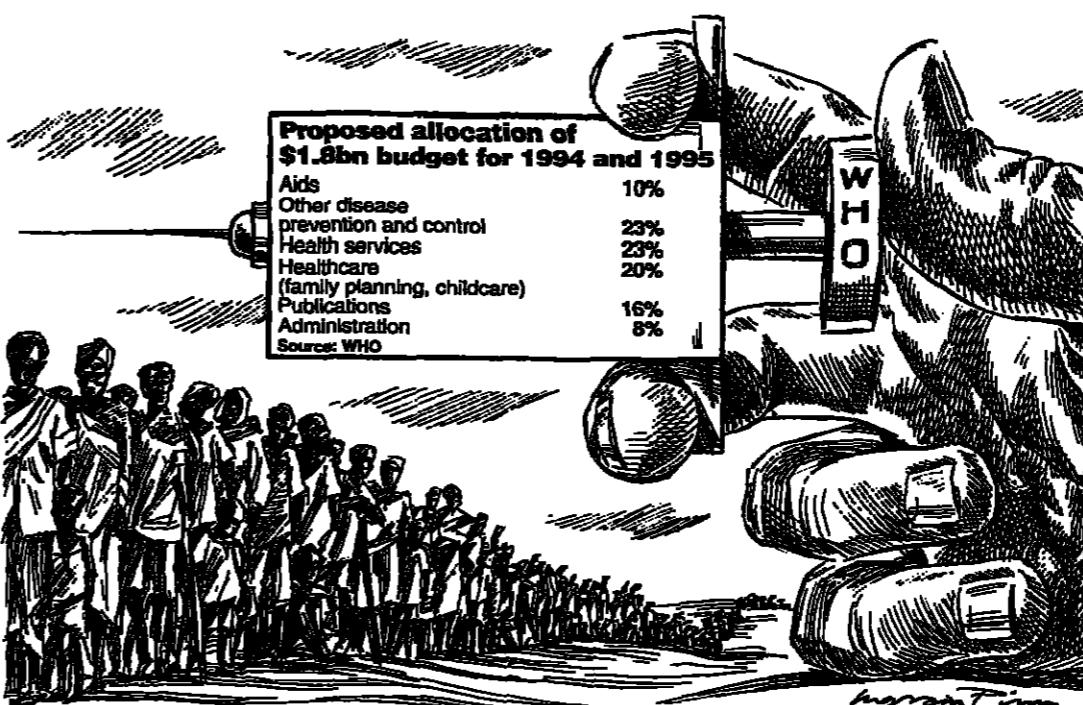
Founded in 1948, in the flush of post-war humanitarian ideals, the WHO is dedicated to tackling some of the world's most intractable problems — the growth of population and the spread of disease. Its greatest triumph came with the eradication of smallpox in 1977. Its influence is considerable: its pronouncements can force governments to clean up drinking water or persuade mothers that "breast is best" for their babies.

Yet the organisation lacks the high public profile of some of the smaller UN agencies which have been fighting emergencies in Bosnia and Somalia, such as Unicef, the children's fund, or the UNHCR refugee schemes. "We could fly in like them, with good-looking doctors and TV crews, but it's not our style," says one WHO official.

Primarily a research and advisory

Not in the best of health

The WHO faces recurring internal divisions and doubts about its effectiveness, says Bronwen Maddox



body, many of whose 4,500 staff hold degrees from top western medical colleges, the WHO adopts a low-key approach. Its doctors point out that together with its long-term outlook, this makes success hard to define. Smallpox is the only disease that has eradicated, and future triumphs are unlikely to be as clear-cut. It had intended malaria to be the second "wipe-out" but it realised more than 20 years ago that it would have to limit its goals. It now has a vaccine in sight, the WHO says it is trying simply to curb the spread of the disease. Its doctors say they judge success by small steps — persuading health ministers to take AIDS seriously or setting up the distribution of condoms to Nigerian brothels.

But now that recession is making

developed countries look more closely at their aid budgets, the low public awareness of much of the WHO's work and the difficulty of measuring progress leaves it vulnerable in the fierce international competition for humanitarian funds.

Its core or "regular" budget covering 1992 and 1993 was \$734m, a quarter contributed by the US and 12 per cent by Japan. For several years,

children, but the rest live in the poorest countries where disease is most prevalent. Universal immunisation "may be almost impossible", says one official.

The spread of AIDS, perhaps the biggest challenge the WHO faces and the one with which it is most closely identified in the public mind, presents even greater difficulties. With no vaccine in sight, the WHO says it is trying simply to curb the spread of the disease. Its doctors say they judge success by

small steps — persuading health ministers to take AIDS seriously or setting up the distribution of condoms to Nigerian brothels.

While the new funds are welcome, the trend has led to accusations from some of the 162 member countries that donor countries are "hijacking" the WHO by giving money only where they are assured of control, and that its priorities are increasingly selected by lobby groups in developed countries.

The AIDS prevention and testing programme attracts much of the criticism as it is now the largest

single programme and one of the largest in the UN, with an annual budget of about \$80m and a worldwide staff of 450. The US, which has shown vigorous support, finds about a quarter of the funds.

Dr Michael Merson, director of the AIDS programme, is adamant that its size is justified. "I don't know of any other disease that affects young and middle-aged adults, is 100 per cent fatal, and can penetrate 30 per cent of some populations — I think it's a wise investment to put in this kind of money."

In contrast, the WHO's research into "human reproduction", which includes some of its work on contraception, gets only about a quarter of the amount provided for AIDS. That is partly because in the past the US has not contributed to work involving abortion, even though the projected doubling of the world's population to 10bn in the next 50 years will jeopardise standards of health in many countries.

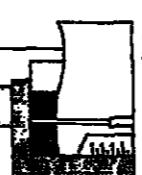
However, Dr Paul van Look, head of the reproduction programme, says that lack of money has not been a problem. He says he is pleased with achievements such as persuading the Chinese government to distribute more efficient copper intrauterine devices instead of steel ones to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies.

In light of the increasing strains and problems of defining the WHO's role, the anxiety among member countries and staff about who runs the organisation is understandable. Some of the antagonism over the election arose simply from a clash of styles: Mr Nakajima's cautious bureaucratic approach clearly jars with the WHO's rangy, shirt-sleeved doctors who itch to leave Geneva for the villages of Africa and Asia. But he also lacks vision at a time when many WHO staff feel they need a charismatic leader to articulate the organisation's ideals to the outside world. That sort of role appears to make him uncomfortable. He says: "Of course I could talk about leprosy or polio, but my priorities for the next five years are streamlining the budget and improving internal co-ordination."

There seems some justification too, for his critics' accusations of poor communication. Although he speaks English, the meaning behind phrases such as "the priority of structure" or "paradigms of health-care" can be elusive.

The countries which voted for him may be right in calculating that the Japanese financial contributions to the WHO will grow. But Dr Nakajima's re-election may nonetheless prove to be a source of recurring friction within the WHO at a time when it faces its greatest external challenges.

Power must return to the provinces



Britain needs strong, stable local government now more than at any time in recent years. Few aspects of modern British politics and administration have been more wasteful of public money and time than the seemingly endless disputes which have taken place between Whitehall and town halls.

It is time for these disputes to end and to establish a new partnership between central and local government. While central government will always be the stronger partner, a reasonable recognition of the practical limits of its power and even more of its perspective is needed. Then we shall be able to make better headway in facing up to the country's social and economic problems.

The government is learning this lesson, yet it continues to propose far-reaching changes in the powers and responsibilities of local government.

Indeed, Britain is now close to a

situation in which Whitehall takes decisions on relatively small matters affecting local people and communities. This is without it being able to place the issues in a local context, and it risks increasing people's alienation from the political system.

My case for local government has four elements.

The first is the most nebulous but the most important. Is it possible to imagine a healthy democracy at the level of the national government without there being a sound foundation in some system of local government?

A healthy democracy rests not just upon a national parliament but needs vigorous political debate not only at the level of the national government but in the localities. It needs a means for communities to balance conflicting interests locally rather than needing to refer to the central authority, and a proper system of local accountability for financial management and property.

The government is learning this lesson, yet it continues to propose far-reaching changes in the powers and responsibilities of local government.

Too often local democracy has

been replaced by appointed bodies, answerable only to the centre. And

I know from personal experience that the power and influence of an appointee are much less than that of a person who has been elected to a position, however flawed the process of election may be.

Second, by spreading decision-makers we minimise the effects of any errors in public policy. We have the opportunity to experiment, perhaps to take some risks without

Democracy rests not just upon a national parliament but needs vigorous political debate locally

committing the whole body politic to a particular course of action.

It may well prove better to organise the provision of health, education or housing services in a new way. But what if it is not? By concentrating so much power at the centre we risk getting things spectacularly wrong and fail to allow for the testing and evaluation of new policy initiatives.

Local government is also of continuing importance to Britain's economy. It employs 2.8m people and spends \$60bn a year. It provides the necessary social and physical infrastructure to our economic life.

A national partnership would allow central government time to concentrate upon national concerns with corresponding benefit to public policy.

Third, a better partnership could in several ways save public expenditure. One would be by eliminating over time many of the organisations that have grown or been newly established in recent years to take over in whole or in part functions which were once the preserve of local authorities.

Finally, the lessons of a comparative study of Britain's main competitor nations ought to be heeded. Each starts from a different position in the relative powers of its central and regional or local government. But none of our European partners is significantly reducing the power of local authorities. Nor does there appear to be so many disputes with local authorities, nor proposals to take over local powers and services

without consultation with local government.

The new democracies in eastern Europe are busy establishing vibrant local and regional governments. Can all these countries

really be wrong while Britain is right? Recent history strongly suggests otherwise.

Britain's local government is not perfect. By its very nature some authorities will manage their affairs better than others. But local government has gone a long way in recent years towards putting its own house in order. Westminster and Whitehall need to recognise this and be prepared to return some of the real power lost by local communities in recent years.

If the principle of "subsidiarity" is right for Europe, why is it not also right for Britain?

Martin Easteal

The author is chief executive of the Local Government Commission for England, which is reviewing local government structure

OBSEVER



"I'm in industry - I'm a receiver"

announced that William Waldegrave "is tasked by the prime minister, with identifying areas of excessive secrecy in government and to carry forward the moves already under way across government towards greater openness". Perhaps it's time for a discreet silence on educational standards.

Fresh-faced

With an eye on the UK Budget, now less than six weeks away, the BBC has finally finished fine-tuning its economic teams.

Garry Baker, 30, and with a first in PPE from Oxford, has been hauled out of Panorama, where he was a producer, to take over as economics correspondent from Steve Levinson, 44, who has defected to Channel 4 news.

Levinson, an old Press Association hand, did a lot to improve the BBC's economic coverage after Daniel Jeffreys quit.

However, the 1990 arrival of Peter Jay, well-known economic guru and former ambassador to Washington, meant that Levinson had to move if he wanted to be more than number two. Another casualty of Jay's growing economic empire is Dominic Harrod, 32, son of the late Sir Roy Harrod. He's been economics editor of BBC radio since 1978 and leaves next month.

Broadcasters, who can fit effortlessly between radio and TV, are all the rage at the Beeb

currently and, as an old wireless man, Harrod seemed increasingly sidelined. What's left of his empire will now fall into Jay's hands.

By contrast, Baker seems to have all the right connections. He's no stranger to BBC director-general John Birt, having started his TV career on LWT's Weekend World, and also gets on well with Jay. He produced Jay's recent documentary about Bill Clinton during the making of which the Beeb's 36-year-old economic guru is reported to have sampled his first McDonald's hamburger.

Daf's death notice

Moved by the plight of his compatriot company, a Daf driving Dutch haulier decided to do his bit by calling on customers to continue buying trucks from Daf. So Peter Stoop, general director of Breda Transport, took out an ad in the *Algemeen Dagblad*: "Let your national feelings speak if you are about to invest in new material!" he urged fellow truckers.

Unfortunately, the newspaper placed the ad at the bottom of the deaths column.

Spouse appeal

Does Hillary Clinton actually like the saxophone? In *Observer's* experience, where one half of a couple is a saxophone, the other is a saxaphone.

Hot seats and musical chairs

■ What should be a routine game of musical chairs at the European Commission, following the recent reshuffle of commissioners, is starting to become rather fun. It seems that the Germans are having second thoughts about how they want to play the "name-your-director-general" part of the game.

Each member state gets to fill a chair. The Germans had been expected to use Dieter Fisch's departure from the EC development policy directorate — he couldn't get on with his prickly Spanish commissioner Manuel Marín — to appoint its own man as DG in charge of the new common security and foreign policy division. Gunter Burghardt, Jacques Delors' highly regarded foreign policy adviser, seems to have been under the impression that the job was his for the asking.

INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES AND FINANCE

DM1bn loss at BfG due to problem country risksBy David Waller
in Frankfurt

BFG BANK, the German bank majority-owned by Crédit Lyonnais of France, made a net loss of DM1.1bn (S681m) last year as a result of a significant increase in provisions against problem-country risks.

At the operating level, the bank raised its group profit by about DM100m from DM144m in 1991.

It is aiming for a further increase in operating profits during the current year, assuming falling interest rates in Germany.

Until the end of last year, BfG was owned by the Aachener und Münchener Betriebsgenossenschafts insurance group and the BGAG trades-union holding company.

Majority-control was acquired by Crédit Lyonnais, the large state-owned French bank, in a deal that valued BfG at DM2.1bn.

The bank said that it had increased its provisions against doubtful-country debts to 75 per cent from 50 per cent of the total exposure.

It also increased the absolute number of countries covered.

The provisions accounted for DM910m of the DM1.1bn net loss, the bank said.

BfG traditionally had strong business links with the eastern bloc, which left it with a high level of bad and doubtful debts.

Shareholders injected DM1bn over 1990 and 1991 to enable the bank to provide against about 50 per cent of questionable debts of DM3.2bn at the

end of 1991. The increased provisioning was agreed as part of the deal with Crédit Lyonnais.

The French bank has injected DM1.2bn into its new German subsidiary in order to bolster its balance sheet.

It said that it had been able to reduce the level of provisioning against domestic loans during the course of the past year.

Without giving any details, it said that trading profits had increased while the level of securities write-offs had declined.

These preliminary details were released in Paris to coincide with the Crédit Lyonnais general meeting to approve the acquisition.

Full details will be published in March.

Swiss Bank Corp rises 6.6% to SFr805m

By Ian Rodger in Zurich

SWISS BANK CORPORATION, Switzerland's second-largest bank, has disclosed that parent company net profits in 1992 rose 6.6 per cent to SFr805m, (S51.3m) enabling it to maintain its dividend.

The bank forecast last July that profits would be flat this year because of the unfavourable economic environment and the exceptional costs of absorbing acquisitions.

However, it said fourth-quarter trading revenues were exceptionally good and significant extraordinary gains were made from sales of assets.

Total assets stood at SFr172bn at the end of last year, up from SFr169bn a year earlier.

The bank said it would seek shareholder approval at the annual meeting in April to eliminate its participation certificates, converting them into bearer shares at the rate of one-for-one. It would also seek to split its registered shares two-for-one.

"This will ensure the pre-ponderance of the registered shares in terms of voting, as is required under the Bank Act... as proof of Swiss control," it said.

The directors will propose that shareholders have the choice of receiving their dividends in the form of shares as well as cash.

Telus to partner CUC on cable TV in UK

TELUS, the Alberta telecoms utility privatised in 1991, will partner Toronto's CUC Broadcasting in developing cable TV operations in Britain, writes Robert Gibbons in Montreal.

Telus will invest C\$126m (\$100m) in equity over five years and will provide telephone services.

CUC holds eight franchise areas in the Midlands and South-East but has only recently begun to line up subscribers.

La Vache Qui Rit, the creamy cheese with a chuching cow on its box, is one of France's most popular cheeses. It is being talked of as a takeover target in the speculation over the future of Bel, its owner.

Bel, which also owns Port Salut and Les Petits Anis, is one of the few large French cheese companies still under family control. Mr Robert Flevet, its chairman and controlling shareholder, is 84 years old.

Besnier, the acquisitive French dairy group, has been buying Bel shares and owns 8.1 per cent of the company. It has made no secret of its hopes of raising its stake further.

However, Besnier is not the only predator in the French cheese industry. Bongrain, another ambitious dairy concern, has made a number of acquisitions and is intent on expansion. Philip Morris, the US group which is a significant player in processed cheese through Kraft, is also eyeing the French market.

"We've already seen a great deal of change in this industry," said Mr Claude Boutein, joint chairman of Bongrain. "There is still more to come. The only question is how quickly?"

French cheese is an attractive area for investment. The European cheese market

slowed in the second half of last year, reflecting the economic squeeze in France and other European countries.

However, cheese still has relatively high growth potential in the mature food market.

France has a strong cheese-making tradition and plentiful supplies of milk. The 340 French cheeses tend to be high quality products that are well placed to benefit from the European trend towards more sophisticated food.

In the short term, the growth of the cheese market will remain relatively low," said Mr Michael Oertel, European food analyst at UBS Phillips & Drew in London. "But in the long term there is strong growth potential for high-quality French cheeses, particularly in Germany and Spain."

The French cheese industry is polarised between a handful of very large companies - Besnier, Bel, Bongrain - and hundreds of small family companies and co-operatives. The small players are finding it increasingly difficult to operate in the French market, which is dominated by multinational manufacturers, such as Nestlé of Switzerland, and France's BSN, and multiple retailers, notably Carrefour and Casino.

As a result, there is no shortage of acquisition targets for the large cheese makers.

Bonrain has grown rapidly both inside and outside France, increasing its sales to FF75.7bn (\$1.75bn) from FF55.85bn in the five years to 1991. Last summer it took a 10 per cent stake in ULN, a troubled co-operative of Normandy dairies, but, because of ULN's fragile finances, was able to sell full management control.

The company is searching for other acquisitions. "We have a strong balance sheet and if suitable opportunities arise, particularly in branded cheeses or interesting areas of technology, we'll take them," said Mr Boutein.

Beacon, a co-operative chaired by Mr Michel Besnier, is pursuing a similar strategy. It is one of Europe's largest dairy groups with annualised sales of FF78.62m for 58 per cent of Roquefort cheese in a deal with Nestlé, the Swiss food group which had acquired the stake as part of its bid for Perrier mineral water. Besnier has since increased its holding to 69 per cent.

Bel is Besnier's latest target. Mr Bernard Aubert, chief executive, said after the recent share-buying exercise that Besnier had "absolutely no ulterior motives" towards Bel, but that it hoped to acquire a "more significant holding". He

also envisaged amassing similar stakes in other businesses.

Bonrain and Bel have been able to expand without coming into competition with the multinational manufacturers that dominate other areas of the food market.

Cheese production is a complex process with limited scope for economies of scale. It is also prone to supply problems due to sharp seasonal variations in milk production.

As a result, the general food groups have tended to favour sectors such as processed cheese, rather than finely French products.

Nestlé chose to sell Roquefort to Besnier (partly to placate the French financial establishment), although it has significant cheese interests in Spain. BSN is a significant force in French *fromage frais*, but its cheese business is bigger in Italy than in its native France.

Bonrain and Besnier may face stiffer competition partly because advances in dairy technology are eroding production problems.

Philip Morris has been suggested as a potential purchaser for Bel. Its interest may well have prompted Besnier to speed its share buying in Bel in order to make sure that it had a blocking stake, in case La Vache Qui Rit does come up for sale.

Sheikh quits Circle K buy-out

By Nikki Tait in New York

SHEIKH Ali al-Khalifa al-Sabah, who as Kuwait's finance minister strongly influenced the activities of the Kuwait Investment Office, has withdrawn from the Investcorp organisation consortium which is attempting to buy and reorganise Circle K, the bankrupt US convenience store chain.

However, the Arizona-based retailer added that Investcorp - an investment organisation with offices in Bahrain, London and New York, and a sizeable shareholder in the likes of Saks Fifth Avenue and Tiffany - had said that it would provide the equity funding. There was no immediate response from the Circle K bondholders, who have been urging a rival reorganisation plan.

Investcorp, via a vehicle

CREDIT MANAGEMENT

The FT proposes to publish this survey on
March 10 1993

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The larger producers are seeking to expand, writes Alice Rawsthorn

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Japanese shipbuilder cuts profits forecast

NEWS IN BRIEF

MITSUBISHI Heavy Industries, the Japanese shipbuilder and machinery maker, has cut its pre-tax profit forecast for the year to March by 6.7 per cent to Y140bn (\$1.1bn), as a decline in capital spending by Japanese industry has slowed machinery orders, writes Robert Thomson in Tokyo.

Sales for the current year are now forecast at Y2.48bn, about the same as last year and 1 per cent lower than originally forecast. Net profits are forecast at Y85bn, down from Y90bn in 1991.

Arab Banking Corp, the largest Arab offshore banking group, posted a 7.6 per cent rise in net profits to \$79m for 1992, AP-DJ reports from Manila.

Operating profits increased 15 per cent to \$244m while pre-tax profits advanced 13 per cent to \$102m.

Two investment management and advisory companies linked with Industrial Bank of Japan, the long-term credit bank, and New Japan Securities, the bank's affiliated brokerage, are to merge on April 1, Reuter reports from Tokyo.

IBI NW Asset Management will be created by the merger of New Japan International Management and IBIJW Asset Management. Japan is scheduled to lower barriers between the banking and brokerage industries in April.

Public Bank, Malaysia's third largest bank, has bought a 55 per cent stake in the Kuala Lumpur Mutual Fund (KLMF), a unit trust management concern, for M\$5.6m (\$2.13m) in cash, Reuter reports from Kuala Lumpur.

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Highlights from the Interim Reports for the six months ended 31 December 1992 (Unaudited)

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INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES AND FINANCE

Joss takes the hot seat at Westpac

Kevin Brown on the problems facing the bank's new chief executive

WESTPAC Banking Corporation, the troubled Australian bank, has a rule that only the chairman can be questioned by shareholders at its annual meeting.

It is a convention that will be welcomed by Mr Robert Joss, the Californian banker appointed last week to Westpac's vacant chief executive's chair.

Mr Joss, a vice-chairman of Wells Fargo, the San Francisco-based regional bank, was not present at Westpac's vitriolic annual meeting, which ended last week after more than 16 argumentative hours spread over two days. But after studying Westpac over several weeks, he will know for certain what many shareholders already suspect: that things are likely to get worse before they get better.

Mr John Uhrig, the no-nonsense miner who took over as chairman of Westpac in October, gave much the same message to shareholders at the annual meeting, warning that it would be "unwise to assume that we will not have to contend with further setbacks."

Westpac shareholders have become all too familiar with bad news over the last year as the bank has been hit by a catalogue of disasters which reads like the script for a banker's nightmare.

The year started with bad publicity about risky foreign currency loans and embarrassing leaked letters; it continued with a failed A\$1.2bn rights issue; and it ended with net losses of A\$1.5bn (US\$1.3bn) for the year to September, after writing off bad debts of A\$2.6bn.

Five directors quit in October, including Sir Eric Neal, chairman, followed in December by Mr Frank Conroy, chief executive, after a boardroom row over his recovery plan. Meanwhile, Mr Kerry Packer and an associate joined the board after acquiring 10 per cent of the shares, and promptly walked out of their first board meeting after another row.

Mr Joss, who will inherit the

mess when he arrives in Sydney later this month, will be uncomfortably aware of the giant shadows cast over Westpac by the enigmatic Mr Packer and the AMP Society, Australia's biggest financial institution, which owns 15 per cent of the bank.

Both Mr Packer and Mr Ian Salmon, managing director of AMP, have made clear that they want to see a rapid improvement in the bank's fortunes. But there seems to be little agreement about how the

its Australian retail operations, which he believes can be sharpened up sufficiently to close the gap between Westpac and National Australia Bank (NAB), which has an expense-to-income ratio of 57.5 per cent. US analysts say it is highly regarded for the part it played in guiding Wells to recovery from similar problems to those that face Westpac.

"It was a team effort, but he certainly played a big part in it, and that will stand him in good stead when he takes over

be handled very carefully." • Poor return on assets and higher-than-average expenses. Since Mr Conroy's departure, Westpac has indicated that it is considering reducing staff by up to 20 per cent, or 4,000 people, to help drive down its expenses-to-income ratio. Redundancies on this scale would bring the bank's staffing into line with NAB, but if it is done too quickly it could damage the bank's core retail activities.

"In spite of all its problems, Westpac's share of the domestic loans and bills market has remained unchanged at about 17 per cent," says Mr Drummond. "The bank has to move quickly to protect that market share, but if it moves too quickly it will damage the retail franchise, and that is the heart of the business."

• Bad debts. The key problem is the weak Australian commercial property market, which has significantly reduced the underlying assets against which many bad debts are secured. Mr Conroy tried to clear the decks last year.

But Westpac is due to revalue its property portfolio in March, and analysts say the crucial Sydney market has fallen by more than 10 per cent since the last revaluation in March 1992.

The revaluation, one of the "further setbacks" feared by Mr Uhrig, is likely to cut a further A\$600m from Westpac's property portfolio.

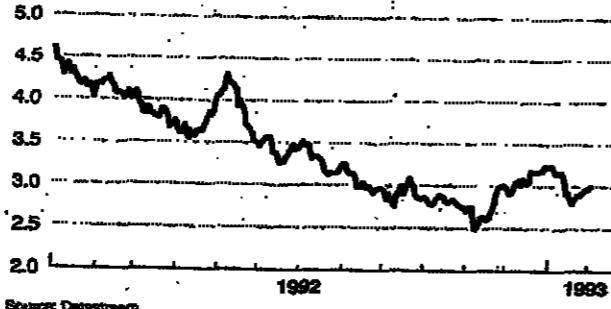
Westpac shareholders went away from last week's annual meeting less than convinced that the worst is over, but ready to give the new chief executive a chance.

Can he deliver? "Wells Fargo managers are among the best in the US has," says Mr Campbell Chaney, banking analyst at Sutro and Co in San Francisco. "Several have gone on to clean up other banks, and Joss is equally capable of doing that."

Westpac shareholders will be waiting anxiously to see whether this judgment is correct. If it is not, Mr Uhrig can expect another rough ride at next year's annual meeting.

Westpac Banking

Share price (A\$)



Source: Datamonitor

new chief executive should go about it.

Mr Conroy, a long-time Westpac executive who had held the top job for just 14 months, produced a recovery plan which initially commanded the support of the entire board.

Under the Conroy plan, the bank would have cut costs and increased revenue by A\$300m by September, cut its non-interest expense to total income ratio from 70 per cent to 58 per cent over three years, and reduced gross assets by about A\$10bn from A\$110bn.

Mr Conroy quit because the board, under pressure from Mr Packer, wanted him to speed up the restructuring. But the board balked at Mr Packer's plans to put the shake-up in the hands of his American lieutenant, Mr Al Dunlap, who has acquired the sobriquet "chainsaw" for his zeal in slashing the costs of Mr Packer's private companies.

Mr Joss says his broad strategy is to refocus the bank on

at Westpac," says Mr Ray Soifer, banking analyst at Brown Brothers Harriman in New York.

But with no clear guidance from the board, it is not clear how Mr Joss will approach Westpac's three main problems:

• Poorly performing international assets. Westpac has about 48 per cent of gross assets outside Australia, split fairly evenly between the US, Europe, New Zealand and Asia. The worst performing assets are in Europe and the US, where Westpac's inferior credit rating, caused by its bad debt problems, makes it impossible to compete with domestic banks.

"They need to run these assets down as quickly as they can," says Mr Craig Drummond, banking analyst at J.B. Were in Melbourne.

"But it is no good just sticking all the capital back in Australia because of the competition from NAB. So it has to

Trencor gains W&A for R350m

By Philip Gash in Cape Town

TRENCOR, the Cape-based transport and trading company, is to gain control of W&A, a diversified South African consumer and industrial group, through a capital injection of R50m (\$11.8m).

The deal brings together two of South Africa's largest companies not controlled by the country's big mining houses or financial institutions.

The two groups yesterday announced that companies in the W&A group - comprising FS group, FSI corporation, Walcor and W&A - would

launch rights offers to raise at least R500m. Trencor would invest R350m by underwriting the offers and taking up rights.

Trencor and a management consortium led by its controlling shareholder, Mr Jeff Liebesman, will exercise joint control of W&A at board and executive levels and will appoint an executive chairman.

Trencor, a very low profile company, has produced good results over a number of years, while W&A has struggled to shake off problems of excessive levels of debt.

Trencor, with a market capitalisation of about R2.7bn, is

one of the most highly-rated stocks on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange with a price/earnings ratio of 21. W&A, with a market capitalisation of about R210m and a p/e ratio of 3.3, has long had a poor rating.

Mr Liebesman said yesterday that the proceeds of the rights issue would be used to redeem debt and would reduce significantly the group's gearing. The compatibility of the two groups' interests would create promising business opportunities, particularly in export-related and international fields. Mr Liebesman said the disposal of non-core assets would continue.

New Indian car targeted at Europe

MARUTI Udyog, jointly owned by Suzuki Motor, the Japanese minicar producer, and the Indian government, is developing a small car for export to Europe, Reuter reports from New Delhi.

Mr R.C. Bhargava, Maruti managing director, said the Maruti Y-2, a four-door hatchback with a one litre engine, would be unveiled after trial production begins in April.

Maruti plans to manufacture about 70,000 of the cars a year by the end of 1994 and about 50,000 will be for export, Mr Bhargava said. The rest will be sold locally.

"Europe will be the right market for this car," Mr Bhargava said, adding it would be fuel-efficient and meet European emission standards.

The Y-2 would replace Maruti's 800cc model currently sold in Hungary, Italy, Poland and Portugal.

Mr Bhargava said he expected the Y-2 to compete against Fiat, Peugeot and Renault compact cars.

Maruti exported 23,000 of its 800cc model, the largest selling car in India, in the year to March 1992. Exports for 1992-93 are expected to be only about 15,000, because of the war in the former Yugoslavia, which used to be a large market.

US groups consider NZ Rail bid

By Terry Hall in Wellington

TWO US companies have declared an interest in bidding for New Zealand Rail, the government-owned railway that is being offered for sale internationally. Strong interest is rumoured from other overseas interests, including the UK rail and ferry operator.

To date, only the two US companies, Railroad Development Corporation, a Pittsburgh railway group, and Burlington Northern, a Texas rail operator, have announced they are considering buying New Zealand Rail.

The sale of New Zealand Rail is expected to fetch up to NZ\$400m (US\$210.5m). The government hopes to complete the sell-off by the middle of this year, and has appointed Booz Allen and Hamilton, the international management consultancy, to handle the sale.

Mr Robert Pietrandrea, chairman and vice-president of Railroad Development Corporation, said New Zealand Rail was a "unique" operation that had defied conventional wisdom by making money out of passenger services. It was also one of the few railroads in the world that was profitable.

Railroad Development Corp-

ration is owned by Hawthorn Group, which also has property, media and other interests. It also runs freight lines in Argentina and manages a 1,000km line between Omaha and Chicago.

It has been reported that Sea Containers may be part of a consortium being put together by the New Zealand-based Owens Group, one of New Zealand's biggest road and port transport companies. A group of New Zealand port companies, including the Auckland, Tauranga and Lyttelton port companies, is also preparing to bid in order to retain ownership in New Zealand hands.

NOTICE OF EARLY REDEMPTION

Sakura Finance Asia Limited

(Formerly known as Mizuho Tokyo Kobe Asia Limited)

(Formerly known as Mizuho Finance Asia Limited)

U.S. \$100,000,000

Guaranteed Floating Rate Notes 1996

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the Holders of the Notes (the "Noteholders") that, in accordance with Condition 7(b) of the Terms and Conditions endorsed on the Notes, Sakura Finance Asia Limited will on the 8th March, 1993 ("Redemption Date") redeem all of the Notes then outstanding at 100% of their principal amount together with interest accrued to such date. Payments of principal and accrued interest will be made on and after the Redemption Date in the manner provided in the Conditions against the surrender of the Notes and Coupon No:19 due on 8th March, 1993 at the specified office of any of the appointed paying agents. Coupon No:19 and subsequent will be rendered null and void from the Redemption Date.

FISCAL AND PRINCIPAL PAYING AGENT

Hambros Bank Limited

41 Tower Hill

London EC3A 4HA

PAYING AGENTS

Manufacturers and Traders

Trust Company

1 M and J Plaza, Buffalo

New York NY 14240

(for payment of Principal only)

Morgan Guaranty Trust Co

16 Raiffeisenz Quay

16 Raiffeisenz Quay

Brussels, Belgium

The Sakura Bank, Limited

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INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES AND FINANCE

Upjohn advances by 13% despite Halcion setback

By Alan Friedman
in New York

UPJOHN, the US pharmaceuticals group, yesterday reported a 13 per cent rise in its fourth-quarter 1992 net earnings, to \$154m, or 86 cents a share.

Mr Theodore Cooper, chairman and chief executive, said the group achieved a solid performance in 1992 despite numerous challenges - including a 45 per cent decline in worldwide sales of Halcion, the controversial sleep medication.

The Michigan-based company said the profits figure excluded the cumulative effects of accounting changes adopted in the quarter. Revenues in the quarter showed a 9 per cent improvement at \$989m.



Theodore Cooper: the group achieved a solid performance

For the whole of 1992, Upjohn had net profits of \$562m, a 4 per cent increase on

1991 results. Revenues were 7 per cent higher at \$3.84bn in 1992.

After including special restructuring charges and the reserves related to accounting changes, Upjohn's 1992 net profit was \$312.2m, or \$1.74 per share, compared with \$325.1m, or \$2.87, in 1991.

Consolidated US sales were \$2.3bn in 1992, some 6 per cent better year-on-year. Non-US sales were 8 per cent improved at \$1.42bn, amounting to 38 per cent of total revenues.

Pharmaceutical sales outside the US surpassed \$1bn for the first time and were 8 per cent higher in 1992. Agricultural division sales were 6 per cent up in 1992.

The company, with a lacklustre profits record in recent years, has been showing signs of a more aggressive approach to its problems, including the announcement of 2,000 redundancies.

Mr Kay Whitmore, the chairman, reiterated the company's penitential tone when he declared that from now on Kodak would "better align our structural costs with realistic volume projections. We will view the world as it is, and not as we might wish it to be. And our view will be fixed on increasing shareholder value."

The fourth-quarter earnings worked through at 92 cents a share and compared with a loss of \$1.23 a share in the same period of 1991, when the company took after-tax restructuring charges of \$59.7m, or \$1.84.

Revenues rose 6 per cent to \$5.40bn from \$5.08bn.

For the full-year net earnings were \$1.15bn, or \$3.53 a share, compared with \$1.7m, or 5 cents, a year ago.

The 1991 figures were reduced by \$1.03m of after-tax charges, while in 1992 a \$152m beneficial accounting change was almost offset by \$141m of restructuring charges.

However, Mr Whitmore acknowledged that "with sluggish volume and cost inflation putting pressure on operating margins, the sale of certain investments was a large factor in the net earnings gain" for 1992.

In the fourth quarter the imaging business produced earnings of \$316m, against a 1991 loss of \$189m, while the information business suffered a loss of \$12m, down from a loss of \$65m, excluding restructuring charges.

ACRI is pinning much of its hopes of returning to profitability on the Alpha chip.

Eastman Kodak back in the black with \$299m

By Martin Dickson
in New York

CHRYSLER, the US carmaker which raised \$1.75bn gross on Tuesday in an international share offering, yesterday saw this success result in an upgrading of its credit rating by Standard & Poor's.

The rating agency's move brought the car company to within one notch of its declared goal of getting its senior debt re-classified as investment grade, rather than the more speculative "Junk" label it has now.

Chrysler's stock offering was priced at \$38.41 a share, the

closing price of the company's shares on the New York Stock Exchange on Tuesday night. The shares rose yesterday to stand at \$38.41, up 31¢, before the close.

Demand from investors was sufficiently strong that the company and its underwriters, led by First Boston, increased the size of the offering from 40m shares to 48m.

Chrysler's share price has nearly quadrupled since the start of last year as the company's financial prospects have improved and the shares continued to perform robustly after the new issue was announced on January 11.

The shares stood at \$36.41 immediately before the announcement, dipped a little immediately afterwards, and then rose, helped by a strong fourth-quarter earnings report.

Standard & Poor's, which raised the company's debt rating from Single-B-Plus to Double-B when the issue was announced, lifted it a further notch yesterday, to Double-B plus.

The next grade up is Triple-B minus, which qualifies as investment grade.

The company has indicated that it will use almost half of the funds raised to reduce the underfunding of its pension

obligations. The shortfall stands at about \$4bn and Chrysler has left open the possibility that all the cash could be contributed to the pension fund.

S&P said that further success by Chrysler with new product launches could enable the company to bolster financial flexibility to levels adequate to protect the company in the event of another severe downturn in market conditions.

"Thus the company could achieve its stand goal of achieving investment grade ratings by early 1995 - or even sooner," S&P added.

Time Warner unveils plan to raise \$1.5bn

By Alan Friedman

TIME WARNER, the leading US media and entertainment group, yesterday offered fresh evidence of its aggressive move to reduce the cost of debt and preferred stock dividends when it said it had filed a shelf registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission to raise up to \$1.5bn.

Over the past few weeks Time Warner has raised \$3.5bn in debentures and spent the proceeds repurchasing the Series D preferred stock which was issued after Time and Warner Communications agreed to merge in 1988.

Some \$3.1b of Series C preferred stock remains outstanding and Time Warner said yesterday it planned to use the next \$1.5bn it raises to redeem some of these securities.

The Series C and D stock in 1991 cost Time Warner a total of \$579m in dividend payments, dragging the company into loss despite healthy operating earnings.

The debentures being issued to replace the Series C and D preferred stock have maturities ranging from five to 40 years.

Analysts believe Time Warner's financial strategy will eventually shift from redeeming preferred stock to the disposal of non-strategic assets in order to raise funds to reduce bank debt.

Allied-Signal lifts profits 33%

By Martin Dickson

ALLIED-SIGNAL, the US high-technology company, yesterday reported a 33 per cent increase in fourth-quarter net income to \$135m, or 93 cents a share. Sales totalled \$3.1bn, up 2 per cent.

The company's share price has nearly quadrupled since the start of last year as the company's financial prospects have improved and the shares continued to perform robustly after the new issue was announced on January 11.

For the full year, Allied reported earnings of \$5.68bn, or \$4.02 a share, up 65 per cent on 1991's earnings of \$3.42bn, or \$2.51, before unusual items.

After special changes in accounting for retiree health benefits and income tax, the company recorded a 1992 net loss of \$12m, or \$0.05 a share.

Mr Bossidy said the group

expected to record net income of between \$4.50 and \$4.75 a share in 1993.

"Our 1992 earnings per share surpassed the high end of the range we had forecast, cash-flow for the year improved by \$345m, and the company's productivity increased by 5.6 per cent," he said.

In the fourth quarter, income from the aerospace business rose 17 per cent to \$75m, mainly due to productivity improvements. Automotive was up 20 per cent at \$38m and engineered materials produced income of \$49m, up 53 per cent.

Citicorp to sell Arizona branches and assets

By Alan Friedman

CITICORP, the largest US commercial bank, yesterday said it had agreed to sell to Norwest, a regional US banking group, 59 branches and most of its assets in Arizona.

Citicorp said the sale of the branches, \$2bn of deposits and \$2.3bn of assets in Arizona was the result of an evaluation which determined that owning Citibank Arizona was no longer strategically necessary for the new systems.

Terms of the transaction were not disclosed, but the bank said the deal would have "no material

financial impact."

Citicorp did say it would take some "modest write-offs" as a result of the deal.

The Arizona interests, once part of Citicorp's ambition to develop holdings across the US, were bought by Citicorp in two stages in 1986 and 1988.

In 1988, Citicorp acquired assets from the United Bank of Arizona from Standard Chartered Bank of the UK for between \$200m and \$250m.

Citibank of Arizona, based in Phoenix, is engaged in retail and community banking activities.

US drugs group eyes Europe

By Paul Abrahams

MARION Merrell Dow, the US pharmaceuticals group, is looking for a substantial pan-European acquisition, according to senior company executives.

The aim of any acquisition would be to increase sales in its European prescription drugs and over-the-counter non-prescription businesses. The group generates about 30 per cent of its turnover outside the US, and about 23 per cent in Europe.

Marion Merrell Dow would also like to acquire manufacturing capacity, says Mr Ron-

ald Irwin, chairman and managing director of Marion Merrell Dow's UK operations.

The group's British production site was acquired by Procter & Gamble, the US consumer products group, when it bought Richardson-Vicks in 1988. Marion Merrell Dow now uses contract manufacturers.

Mr Irwin says the group has considerable cash reserves to make an acquisition. Cash and short-term investments at the end of last year were \$414m.

However, another route available to the company might be a merger. Merchant bankers are known to have approached at least one lead-

Chemical Waste tumbles to \$8.7m

By Laurie Morse in Chicago

CHEMICAL Waste Management, a partially-owned subsidiary of Chicago-based Waste Management, said fourth-quarter earnings fell to \$8.7m, or 4 cents a share, from \$12.2m, or 5 cents, in the 1991 quarter.

The 28 per cent earnings tumble reflects a \$15m, or 7 cents-a-share, after-tax charge associated with the formation of Rust International, a new

global environmental services company. Rust will be majority-owned by Chemical Waste Management.

Chemical Waste's fourth-quarter results were further weakened by a 5 cent-per-share charge linked to its majority-owned subsidiary, The Brand Companies. The Brand Companies, which will become part of Rust International, took a charge on a write-down of its asbestos abatement business.

For the year, Chemical Waste reported earnings of \$12.6m, or 63 cents a share, before accounting changes, up from \$100m, or 49 cents, in 1991. Full-year sales were \$1.5bn, up from \$1.3bn in 1991.

In the fourth quarter, the imaging business produced earnings of \$316m, against a 1991 loss of \$189m, while the information business suffered a loss of \$12m, down from a loss of \$65m, excluding restructuring charges.

ACRI is pinning much of its hopes of returning to profitability on the Alpha chip.

"Samba achieves record results for the fourth successive year."

Directors' Report

Saudi shareholders.

Donations:

During the financial year 1992, Saudi American Bank allocated SR 2,835,388 as donations to various charitable, educational, and other social causes.

Payments to Directors (Members of the Board)

Directors' remunerations for 1992 total SR 600,000. Attendance fees for Board meetings amount to SR 34,000. Attendance fee for Executive Committee meetings equal SR 17,500. Expenses including travel, board & lodging incurred by Directors for attending meetings of the Board & Executive Committee amount to SR 411,536. Compensation of Directors in their capacity as Executive Directors of the Bank amounts to SR 2,848,276.

In addition to the above, Directors' fees and expenses for Samba Finance S.A. (a wholly owned subsidiary) amounted to SR 88,729.

Increase in Share Capital

At an Extraordinary General Meeting of shareholders held on 12 Rajab, 1413H (January 5, 1993) in Riyadh, a resolution to increase the share capital through capitalization of undistributed profits was approved with effect from December 31, 1992. The capitalization will take the form of one share being issued for each share held by existing shareholders as a stock dividend.

Appropriation of Income

The Board of Directors recommends that net income for the year be appropriated/distributed as follows:

Net income for the year	910,331
Transfer to Statutory Reserve	(1,341)
Transfer to General Reserve	(250,000)
Proposed Dividend	(682,748)
Transfer from Retained Earnings	23,658

Dividends shall be available for distribution immediately after approval by the shareholders at their Annual Ordinary General Meeting. Dividend claims may be presented for settlement at the Bank's registered Head Office or any branch of Saudi American Bank.

Administrators:

At the Annual Ordinary General Meeting of the Bank's shareholders, held during March 1992, Misses Whitney Murray & Co. and Al-Juraid & Co. were appointed as joint-administrators to Saudi American Bank for the fiscal year ending 31 December 1992. The forthcoming Annual Ordinary General Meeting of shareholders shall re-appoint the existing auditors or appoint other auditors and determine their remuneration for the audit of the Bank for the year ending 31 December 1993.

The Bank's balance sheet demonstrates the significant business growth achieved by Samba across all banking segments. Customer deposits grew to SR 29.1 billion at the end of 1992 (1991: SR 28.3 billion; 1990: SR 22.9 billion). The loan portfolio increased by SR 2 billion to close the year at SR 11.6 billion (1991: SR 9.6 billion; 1990: SR 7.8 billion); the increase of SR 2 billion results almost entirely from expansion of the Bank's domestic portfolio. Reflecting the higher business volumes, total assets increased to SR 38.3 billion (1991: SR 36.4 billion; 1990: SR 29.9 billion).

Samba's strong business strategy has continued to positively enhance returns on shareholders' equity, which reached 36% (1991: 33%; 1990: 26%). These consistently superior returns are reflected in improved earnings per share of SR 7.9 for the year (1991: SR 6.2 per share; 1990: SR 4.3 per share).

After taking into consideration the Bank's strong earnings momentum and strong capitalization, Samba's Board of Directors recommends a gross dividend of SR 682.7 million for the year 1992. This amount, after deduction of applicable zakat, shall yield a net dividend of SR 55 per share to the

shareholders.

Financial Highlights

	1992	1991
Assets	SR '000	SR '000
Cash and Due from Banks	7,795,343	11,494,499
Bonds and Advances (net)	11,651,239	9,360,712
Leases and Securities	2,	

Rustenburg falls 65.5% on lower metals prices

By Kenneth Gooding,
Mining Correspondent

RUSTENBURG Platinum Holdings, the world's biggest platinum producer, yesterday reported half-year results well below analysts' expectations.

Pre-tax profit fell by 65.5 per cent to R168.7m (£54.5m), earnings per share were down 49.8 per cent to 87.9 cents, and the dividend is to be cut by 25.5 per cent to 62.5 cents a share.

Mr Barry Davison, managing director, said the second-half performance would depend on metals prices. Present prices for all the metals produced by Rustenburg, except palladium, were below those of the first half and could not be expected to rise until there was a substantial improvement in the world economy.

Asked about the potential sale of 38.4 per cent of Johnson Matthey of the UK, the sole marketing organisation for precious metals produced by Rustenburg, by Charter Consolidated, the UK conglomerate, Mr Davison said his company had been in touch with both companies "and we are happy with what is going on."

He said that neither Rustenburg nor any of the other platinum companies managed by Johannesburg Consolidated Investment were directly involved in the negotiations about the JM stake.

Mr Davison noted that the



Barry Davison: dividend cover unlikely to fall below 1.4 times

half-year dividend would be covered 1.4 times by earnings,

"which is a lower cover than has formerly been the case at the interim stage." But Rustenburg was not changing its dividend policy and it was unlikely that cover for the full-year would drop below 1.4 times.

Gross sales for the six months to December 31 slipped by 5.8 per cent to R1.413bn, mainly because of a 34 per cent drop in the rhodium metal price, compared with the same period of 1991, and a 15 per cent fall in nickel prices.

Capital expenditure for the period was R176.9m, down from R240m, and included R34.8m (R109.3m) for expansion projects.

Record HK property deal

By Simon Davies
In Hong Kong

WORLD GROUP, the Hong Kong corporate empire of the late Sir Yue-kong Pao, yesterday paid a record HK\$3.53bn (US\$454m) for a large property development site on the Kowloon Peninsula in an auction held by the Hong Kong government.

World won the bid for the 1.7m sq ft site in Kowloon Hill in the face of competition from all of the colony's leading property developers, including

Cheung Kong, New World Development and Sun Hung Kai Properties.

The deal is to be shared evenly between three of World's listed companies - World International, Wharf Holdings, and Hong Kong Realty and Trust.

Mr John Hung, director of Wharf, said the group would "create the only mega purpose-built retail centre under one roof in that region".

It plans to build retail and residential property on the site.

Mercedes-Benz invests DM800m on research

By Kevin Done
Motor industry Correspondent

MERCEDES-BENZ, the automotive subsidiary of Daimler-Benz, is to invest DM800m (\$490m) to build a new technical centre in Germany for the development of future car models.

The research and development centre will play a crucial role in the German carmaker's plans, announced last week, to transform its strategic product policy.

During the 1990s, it wants to change from being a traditional maker of exclusive luxury cars into an "exclusive full-line manufacturer offering high-quality vehicles in all segments of the market".

Mr Dieter Zetsche, Mercedes-Benz director for car development, said that the company planned to concentrate all new vehicle design, development and engineering operations at only two locations, instead of the present 18 sites in south-west Germany.

The new technical centre will be built in Sindelfingen in south-west Germany, near Mercedes-Benz's main domestic car assembly plant. It is planned to begin operations in 1996 and will have a workforce of around 4,500.

The design and development of engines and transmissions will be concentrated on the group's Unterturkheim plant in Stuttgart.

The carmaker's plans for the new technical centre are a belated recognition that it has fallen behind its rivals in the efficiency of its development and engineering operations.

BMW, its rival German luxury car maker, opened an integrated DM1.1bn research and engineering centre in Munich at the end of 1989.

Correction

Banco Bilbao Vizcaya

THE conversion into dollars of Banco Bilbao Vizcaya's net profit for 1992 was incorrectly reported in the yesterday's FT. The correct figure at current exchange rates is \$696m.

It plans to build retail and residential property on the site.

Behind Paris's marriage of money and chic

Alice Rawsthorn examines the merger between Yves Saint-Laurent and Elf-Sanofi

THE opulent Salon Imperial at the Inter-Continental Hotel in Paris responded with applause last week when Mr Yves Saint-Laurent, one of France's most famous fashion designers, mounted the stage for a standing ovation at the end of his haute couture show.

Mr Saint-Laurent has been showing couture in Paris for more than 30 years, but last week's collection was special. It was his last as an independent designer before YSL, his company, merges with Elf-Sanofi, the pharmaceuticals and cosmetics arm of Elf-Aquitaine, the flagships French oil group.

YSL has struck a complex share swap agreement whereby its perfume will be taken over by Elf-Sanofi, but the fashion business will continue to be run by Mr Pierre Bergé, who co-founded the company with Mr Saint-Laurent.

At first glance, the deal makes sense for both parties. Elf-Sanofi has been expanding its perfume worldwide to augment its pharmaceutical interests. It now has a portfolio of brands, including Nina Ricci and Fendi, which provide FFr3.2bn (£581m) of its FFr19bn annual sales.

But Elf needs to increase its perfume portfolio, preferably with prestigious brands, if it is to continue to compete for distribution in the increasingly consolidated retail sector against powerful players such as L'Oréal and LVMH, the flagships French oil group.

YSL has the prestige that Elf lacks. Its scents, including Opium and Rive Gauche, represent roughly FFr2.5bn of its FFr3bn annual sales. It also needs new inward investment. The growth of the big groups, such as L'Oréal and LVMH, has raised the stakes in fashion.

ion and beauty. It now costs up to \$50m to promote a new perfume worldwide. This is imposing intense financial pressure on independents, like YSL, which barely broke even in the first half of last year.

In theory, last week's deal should give YSL and Elf what they want - money and chic, respectively. In practice, though, things might prove more difficult.

The challenge for Elf is to launch new YSL fragrances. It has the necessary financial resources, but has taken on YSL at a difficult time. The French fashion designers have seen sales fall by 20 per cent in real terms from their 1990 peak to FFr4.5bn in last year. The global beauty market has been relatively static for two years.

Elf also has the problem that, although YSL is still prestigious, it is these days less obviously in the forefront of

fashion. Mr Saint-Laurent's era as an innovator is rooted in the 1970s, when his most successful scents, Rive Gauche and Opium, came out. His classic style, beloved of haute bourgeoisie Parisiennes, is not always in step with the informal fashions of the 1990s. This may make the YSL name less marketable for Elf when it tries to launch new perfumes in the future.

There is also the question of what will happen after Mr Saint-Laurent, now 58 with a history of poor health, retires. Elf might be able to revive YSL under a new designer, as Chanel has done with Mr Karl Lagerfeld. But other houses have found the transition more difficult, notably Balmain and Lanvin, which have experienced a series of design and management changes.

These difficulties are aggravated by the prospects for YSL's personnel within the Elf empire. Mr Saint-Laurent is seen as unpredictable even in the historic Paris fashion world. Mr Bergé is called *Pierre le Panthère* in French business circles for his autocratic style. Until now, they have been free to run their company exactly as they wished.

What occurred in the Scherrer house shows how difficult it can be for fashion entrepreneurs to adjust to a more buttoned-down corporate life. Mr Jean-Louis Scherrer, the founder, stormed out before Christmas after a row with its new owners and the house is now mired in legal suits.

Mr Bergé insists there is no possibility of that scenario recurring at YSL. Even so, the spectre of Scherrer provided an ominous backdrop to Mr Saint-Laurent's last independent cortege show.

Sears loses C\$91m on slower sales

By Robert Gibbons
in Montreal

SEARS Canada, one of the two biggest Canadian retail groups, lost C\$91m (US\$72m), or C\$1.04 a share, in 1992 on sales 3 per cent lower at C\$4.6bn.

Last year's Christmas shopping season was disappointing, Sears said. In 1991, it lost C\$2.9m. The latest period included C\$46m in restructuring charges.

Retailers can now open on Sundays in Ontario and Quebec. Over the past 15 months the Canadian dollar has fallen 12 per cent against the US dollar.

Mr Joseph Reddington, Sears president, said these factors had reduced the flow of Canadians crossing the border to shop in the US.

Sears Canada has closed two catalogue distribution centres.

• Birks, the Canadian jeweller chain will get a cash infusion from Italy's Borghese group. It will keep 38 stores open, having closed 73 stores last year when it sought bankruptcy protection.

Italians return to loans market

By Sara Webb

ITALIAN borrowers are returning to the international syndicated loans market after an absence of several months.

So far, a handful of medium and long-term credit institutions has tapped the loans market with relatively small deals, but bankers expect several more financial institutions and some corporate names to seek international syndicated credits over the next six months because of their relatively heavy borrowing needs.

While the cost to Italian borrowers of raising money from international banks is in some cases higher than in early 1992, bankers believe that as more Italian names return to the market, pricing on Italian deals should start to edge lower.

Italian borrowers have been virtually barred from the syndicated loans market since last July when Efin, the state industrial holding group, went into liquidation. Italian and foreign banks are owed

L.500bn (\$6.22bn).

Initially, the Treasury proposed to repay the Efin loans using bonds with below-market

interest rates, in a deal which was resisted by the banks. The Treasury has now agreed to repayment in full, although international banks are still waiting for their money.

The Efin débâcle meant that few international banks were willing to lend to Italian names - which have traditionally been frequent users of the Euromarkets - in the second half of last year.

However, now that some bankers are satisfied that the problems concerning Efin will be resolved, Italian borrowers are eagerly seeking funds in the international syndicated loans market.

Some of the deals launched in the last few weeks have been quite generously priced, bankers said, in order to woo back lenders. For example, Efin's Meliorconsorzio launched a DM37m seven-year loan paying a margin of 75 basis points over the London interbank offered rate (Libor), which lead manager Sumitomo has said may be increased to 100m.

Other borrowers include Credito Fondiario e Industrie, which has launched a five-year Ecu100m loan priced at 65 basis points over Libor with participation fees of 30 basis points for DM4m amounts.

One of the banks involved said that as this was one of the first "post-Efin" Italian deals to be launched, the deal

Strong US volume lifts 3M to \$289m

By Laurie Morse in Chicago

MINNESOTA Mining & Manufacturing yesterday reported increased fourth-quarter earnings of \$289m, or \$1.32 per share, up 11.5 per cent from \$259m, or \$1.16 per share, in the same 1991 quarter. The company said strong domestic volume helped boost fourth-quarter results, with its industrial and consumer sectors showing gains.

US sales volume gained 8 per cent, while international volume was up 6 per cent. In dollar terms, worldwide sales were \$3.375bn, up from \$3.224bn in the same period last year. Mr L. D. DeSimone, chairman, said the quarter's earnings were limited by economic weakness abroad.

For the year, earnings were \$1.23bn, or \$3.63 per share, up 6.8 per cent from \$1.15bn, or \$3.26, in 1991. On sales of \$13.95b, up from \$13.35b in 1991. The latest full-year results include a charge of \$5m or 2 cents per share, for required accounting changes.

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Notes are hereby given that the notes will bear interest at 5.25% per annum from 4 February 1993 to 4 August 1993. Interest payable on 4 August 1993 will amount to US\$26.40 per LUS\$1,000 note and LUS\$2,632.96 per US\$1,000 note and LUS\$2,632.96 per £1,000 note.
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SPAIN
The FT proposes to publish this survey on
March 15 1993
It will be seen by 95% of the professional investment community in financial institutions across Europe.
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INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL MARKETS

Danish bonds tumble as currency pressures resurface

By Sara Webb in London and Patrick Harverson in New York

DANISH government bonds tumbled yesterday as the Danish currency came under heavy selling pressure, reigniting the tensions within the European exchange rate mechanism.

The Danish central bank raised the rate on its repurchase operations from 11.5 per cent to 13 per cent in order to defend the krone, and several European central banks inter-

GOVERNMENT BONDS

vened in the foreign exchange markets to help support the currency and prevent a devaluation.

The Danish economy minister, Ms Marianne Jelved, ruled out a devaluation of the krone, saying it would be defended at all costs against increasing attacks from currency speculators.

■ PRESSURE on the Danish currency fuelled hopes that the Bundesbank may soon allow an easing in German official interest rates.

The German government bond market ended higher on the day, buoyed by hopes that the public sector unions would agree to a low wage increase this week, allowing the Bundesbank to ease rates.

Dealers noted strong demand for medium-dated paper, which led to a steepening of the yield curve. The Liffe bond futures contract, which opened at 93.38, moved up to a high of 93.38 before ending at around 93.38.

■ FRENCH government bonds closed higher, even though the currency came under pressure again and money-market rates remained relatively high.

The Bank of France announced yesterday it had reopened its 5-10 day lending facility - which was suspended on January 5 - offering funds at 12 per cent for five-day periods. The yield on the 8 per cent bond due 2003 moved from 7.84 per cent to 7.80 per cent.

Elsewhere in Europe, Dutch government bonds rallied on news that the Dutch finance ministry plans to allow open-market trading in stripped components of publicly-issued 30-year government bonds.

FT FIXED INTEREST INDICES

Feb 3 Feb 2 Feb 1 Jan 29 Jan 28 Year ago High * Low *

Govt Securities 95.26 95.27 94.21 94.76 94.63 93.23 95.54 95.11

Fixed Interest 110.87 110.75 109.93 109.85 109.78 109.99 110.87 97.15

Basis 102.02, Government Securities 102.02, Fixed Interest 102.02

Fixed Interest 102.02, Government Securities 102.02 (2/2/93), low 102.40 (2/1/93), low 102.53 (2/1/93)

Fixed Interest high since compilation 110.87 (2/2/93), low 102.53 (2/1/93)

Yield 10.87% 10.86% 10.85% 10.84% 10.83% 10.82% 10.81% 10.80%

5-day average 105.60 105.50 105.40 105.30 105.20 105.10 105.00 104.90

SE 500 activity indices rebased 1974

■ SE 50

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FINANCIAL TIMES

LONDON · PARIS · FRANKFURT · NEW YORK · TOKYO

COMPANY NEWS: UK

Triplex seeks £17.3m via rights

By Paul Cheeseright,
Midlands Correspondent

TRIPLEX LLOYD, the industrial engineering group, is asking shareholders for £17.3m through a 1-for-4 rights issue at 140p a share to finance expansion in its power and automotive and engineering divisions.

The price has been pitched at a discount of 33p to the overnight share price of 173p. It is just 7p above the bottom of the 1992-93 trading range.

The rights issue is the second move in a financial reorganisation of the group. Last month it raised £35m (£23.1m) through a private placement on the US capital markets and, in the process, switched most of its short term debt into medium and long term borrowings at fixed rates of interest.

The cash call, first contempla-

ted last October, constitutes what Mr Colin Cooke, chairman, called "a recharging of our batteries."

Mr John Foley, managing director, said: "We now have cash at fixed rates and the size of balance sheet to finance expansion and some small add-ons as well." The immediate effect, however, is to reduce gearing.

This had increased to 49 per cent, from 30 per cent last September, because of capital expenditure and increased needs for working capital.

It is expected to drop after the rights issue to just over 20 per cent, then rise to a peak of over 40 per cent for two years, before declining again.

Triplex Lloyd will be spending the proceeds over two years. Much will be devoted both to expanding and to raising the technological level of

casting operations, both in the UK and the US.

The spending emphasises the group's policy, evident over the last two years, of concentrating on the development of its power and automotive and engineering businesses. This places a question mark over the future for the building products division.

The new shares will not attract the interim dividend, payable later this month, but will receive the final for the year to March 31 1993. The directors said they expected to hold the final distribution at 45p, maintaining total payments for the year at 7p.

However, the group would not expand further on trading prospects for the current year; at the time of the interim statement last December it said that prospects for the power divi-

sion were rosy - there were "substantial opportunities for growth" - while it was cautious about the automotive and engineering sector and had seen no sign of an upturn in the building products market.

COMMENT

The City expects pre-tax profits for the current year to be about £7m, roughly the same as in 1991-92. Short of any quick economic upturn, shareholders looking for a profits boost will have to rely on the ability of the management to carry out a larger market share in the power and automotive component markets. This is happening to some degree now but the process is unlikely to accelerate until the investment programme has worked through. That points to a quiet current year but greater excitement thereafter.

The new shares will not

Simon sells European consultancy for £10.5m

By Angus Foster

SIMON Engineering, which last August put its environmental division up for sale because of falling profits and worries about its dividend, yesterday announced the sale of its European environmental consultancy business to Northumbrian Water for £10.5m.

This follows last month's £14.2m disposal of its water and waste treatment arm to Thames Water.

The group, however, has

been unable to find a buyer for the third part of its environmental division, the North American consultancy. Mr Brian Kemp, chief executive, said that would now be retained as a "profitable, stand alone business".

Analysts welcomed the sale,

which would cut forecast year

end net borrowings of nearly £100m, equal to gearing of about 30 per cent. However, the change of heart on the North American division was seen as inconsistent and will

reduce the overall proceeds

expected from the disposal

programme. The arm, known as Hydro-Search, was acquired

as Hydro-Search, was acquired

for £4.2m through a

hostile offer valued at £10.5m at the launch of the bid.

Some £14m of the French

acquisition is to be funded by

the allotment of almost 12m

new ordinary shares at 117p

apiece and the balance in cash.

At the December 31 1992

year-end, Kalon had net cash

balances of £12.3m: the pro

forma effect of the acquisition

will reduce that figure to

£6.3m.

Mr Mike Hennessy, group managing director, said that the deal and the price had been "well received" in the City.

The shares rose 1% to

Kalon expands in Europe with £20m French deal

By Peter Pearce

KALON, the paints group, has expanded on the Continent with the acquisition of Novo Holdings and Novodec, its main trading subsidiary and the largest private label paint supplier in France.

The consideration amounts to £19.8m, including £2.2m of debt.

The acquisition comes five months after Kalon failed to acquire Manders (Holdings), its rival paint maker, in a hostile all-share offer valued at £10.5m at the launch of the bid.

Mike Hennessy, group managing director, said: "We are pleased to have made this acquisition,"

which is a "perfect fit".

Under Kalon's ownership,

the management will remain

the same with the exception of

Mr Burke, who is retiring and

will be replaced as chairman by

Mr Hennessy. He said Mr

Burke had sold to Kalon,

because it knew the business

and its management and

because Mr Burke wanted to

preserve what he had created.

Novodec employs 140 people.

Its paints sell throughout

France, mostly in hyper- and

supermarkets and DIY sheds.

Post-tax profits for 1992 are

expected to be £1.2m.



Mike Hennessy: acquisition was "a perfect fit"

make a total of 3.2p (2.2p).

Mr Hennessy said the acquisition of Novodec was "a perfect fit". He said it was in the same position as Kalon in 1988, "strong in private label paints, but without any trade paint or decorative sundries business".

Founded in 1975 by Galeries du Papier Peint and Windeck Paints - which ironically was

acquired by Manders in December 1991 for £5.8m - Novodec

was managed by Mr Graham Burke, who in 1992 became the majority shareholder. The French arm of it acquired a 22

per cent stake in 1990.

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Post-tax profits for 1992 are

expected to be £1.2m.

Application of FRS 3 hitting teething troubles says Capel

By Andrew Jack

TEETHING troubles are beginning to appear in the application by companies of FRS 3, the new accounting standard on the profit and loss account.

City analysts James Capel said yesterday.

In a circular distributed to

clients, the firm warned that a number of variations were

creeping in to the implementation of the standard by different

clients.

It stresses that users of

accounts should not rely on

the sub-totals shown in the

new-style profit and loss

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Holliday gears up for future growth

As the chemicals company approaches its flotation Richard Gourlay looks at its history and prospects

THE FLOTATION this March of Holliday Chemical Holdings, the synthetic dyestuffs and specialty chemicals company, has conjured up a memory of the past. With the cost of debt tumbling for companies strong enough to float from banks from their cash, equity is becoming an expensive way of raising capital.

As a result, a subtle change of attitude towards high gearing may be emerging. After three years in which high debt levels have been as acceptable in the City as smoking before the Queen, gearing - the financial engineers' best friend - may be about to stage a come-back.

Mr Michael Peagam, chairman and chief executive of Holliday, is pondering exactly these issues with his advisers but jokes that he would hate his company to have net cash in the bank.

He can only afford the luxury of this debate as he approaches a flotation, which will value the company at about £140m, because of Holliday's impressive history.

Over the five-year period since Mr Peagam, a doctor of Chemistry, led a management buy-out of Holliday Dyes & Chemicals, sales have risen five-fold to an estimated £100m in 1992.

Operating profits over the same period have grown to about £13.6m, partly as a result of five acquisitions. But Mr Peagam is also at pains to point out that the company has grown organically every year



Michael Peagam: company has grown organically every year

by 10.15 per cent and last year by 20 per cent.

This organic growth is the secret to Holliday Chemicals' appeal and the reason, City observers say, why Mr Peagam's acquisitive ways are likely to receive a warm welcome among investors.

According to Mr David Ingles, chemical analyst at stockbrokers James Capel, the Holliday management has developed a knack not only of spotting and acquiring companies, but running them efficiently and imaginatively.

Often these companies have

performed noticeably better under Holliday than their previous owners. Examples include the acquisition from Hickson International in 1987 of James Robinson and William Blythe, the metal salts company, bought in 1981 also from Hickson.

As the company has grown, Mr Peagam says he has stuck to a strategy of building large shares of niche markets and avoiding direct competition with the major chemical companies.

Holliday's transition into quoted life will be facilitated

by the fact that Mr Peagam and a number of the group's companies have already been in the public arena. He was managing director of Croda Chemicals Division until 1985 when he took a 25 per cent stake in Holliday Dyes and Chemicals, a loss-making company with sales of £5m.

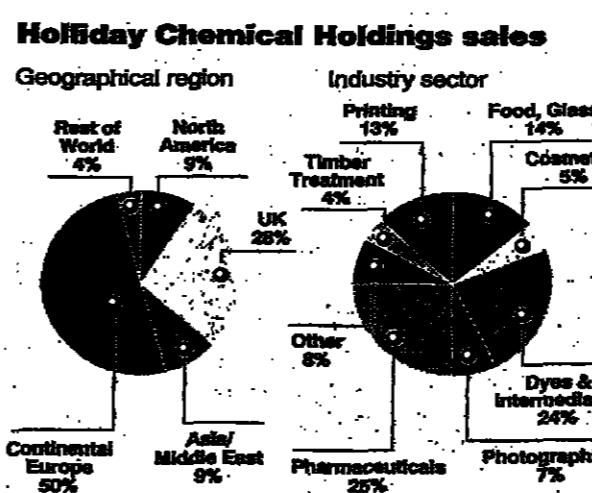
Two years later, Peagam led a management buy-out of Holliday backed by institutions including St. James. The transaction left Mr Peagam with a 28 per cent stake.

This stake is likely to be reduced to approximately 20 per cent. The flotation should raise about £50m, half of which will go to the existing investors; some £30m would be used to substantially reduce debt to about £15m, against equity of about £41m.

This is where the debate begins over the shape of Holliday's balance sheet. Raising about £50m would lead to relatively high gearing - about 50 per cent. Mr Peagam says this is not high when viewed in the light of the nine times interest cover.

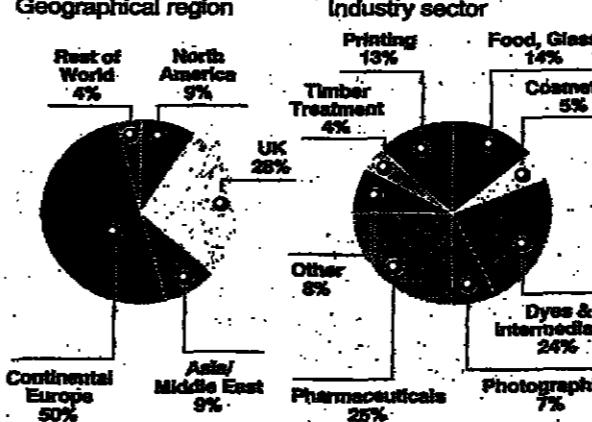
However comfortable the position might be with this level of debt - and it does still focus on balance sheet gearing, not just interest cover - Holliday could face problems with further expansion.

Mr Peagam has said he is not interested in acquisitions smaller than about £10m. If Holliday paid £20m for a company, and took a goodwill write-off equal to about £10m, gearing could easily rise above 100 per cent.



Holliday Chemical Holdings sales

Geographical region



Industry sector

Continental Europe

Other

North America

Rest of World

UK

Asia/Middle East

Other

Europe

Other

North America

Rest of World

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Asia/Middle East

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COMMODITIES AND AGRICULTURE

'Russian farmers needs more aid'

By Leyla Bouillon in Moscow

MR VIKTOR Khlystun, Russia's agriculture minister, said yesterday the state would need to spend far more than the Rbs160bn (£185m) announced last week in extra subsidies to help farmers feed the country.

If the ailing budget could not be stretched any further, Mr Khlystun proposed levying a 3 per cent tax on the profits of enterprises in other sectors of the beleaguered economy to raise money for agriculture, which remains dominated by state and collective farms.

Mr Khlystun said Rbs600bn was needed just to help peasants meet fuel and equipment bills so they could get on with sowing. That was because much of their revenue existed only on paper because they were still owed money by other debt-burdened enterprises.

He said the problems were particularly acute in milk and meat production, which had fallen by 18 per cent last year, compared with a general decline in agricultural output of 8 per cent.

He said he would propose a more effective mechanism for distributing subsidies in a cou-

ple of months. "If you produce better quality meat for instance, you will get a higher subsidy," he told a news conference. His ultimate goal was to shift subsidies from producers to consumers but he said that would not possible until the country developed a social welfare system capable of distributing subsidies to the worst off in society.

Agriculture has been severely affected by a "scissors crisis" under which the price of finished goods, including agricultural equipment, had risen more sharply than prices paid to peasants.

Before last week's package, initially estimated to cost Rbs160bn, Russia's budget deficit for 1993 has been projected at Rbs3.5 trillion (million million), the amount the government sees as the limit for lowering it to 5 per cent of gross domestic product from unofficial estimates of 10 to 15 per cent last year.

Mr Khlystun said government farm subsidies expected to reach Rbs430bn in the first half of this year, would "not be significantly higher" than the Rbs128bn promised and paid for the whole of 1992, if inflation was taken into account.

No extra money to ease EC reforms

By David Gardner in Brussels

THE EUROPEAN Community's new agriculture commissioner, Mr René Stéphen, warned yesterday there would be no extra money to meet the wish-lists of European farm organisations in the wake of last year's reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.

Mr Stéphen was presenting price proposals for the coming farming year, which were approved by the European Commission yesterday after barely 15 minutes of procedural discussion.

This unaccustomed speed was because the prices of the main commodities were predetermined by last year's reform of the CAP, which embodies heavy price cuts over the next three years, for which farmers

will be compensated in direct income payments. Most products outside the reform will have their prices rolled over from last year.

The CAP will cost some Ecu5.1bn (£29m) this year, up over Ecu3.1bn, and Mr Stéphen warned that "room for manoeuvre as far as additional demands are concerned is virtually non-existent".

He cited the cost of financing the reform, and a tighter farm spending ceiling because of lower-than-expected EC growth, as two reasons for fiscal stringency. But he also implicitly blamed EC farm ministers for overriding commission recommendations and retaining the costly "switchover" mechanism.

This gives price increases to most farmers each time an EC currency is devalued, leading

to price rises of over 20 per cent in the past six years. After the last six months of currency turbulence, the commission estimates that "switchover" will cost Ecu1.5bn this year and Ecu1.55bn in 1994.

Yesterday's message was particularly unwelcome in Paris. The French government, facing defeat in next month's general assembly elections, was hoping for additional concessions for its farmers to sugar the pill of the CAP reform, and the controversial cuts in subsidised exports the EC will have to make under the Uruguay Round world trade liberalisation negotiations if these are concluded this year.

Copa, the EC big farm lobby, denounced the price proposals as "an additional burden on European farmers".

Output statistics are not yet available for the farm sector in the former East Germany, which has virtually collapsed

since unification. As far as farm jobs were concerned, the number of full-time agricultural workers dropped from 312,000 in 1991 to 174,000 last year.

The number of agricultural enterprises in the east increased last year as large formerly state-owned farms are being restructured, with over 18,000 agricultural enterprises now registered there. Of these, 41.6 per cent consists of farms between one and 10 hectares. In the West, the number of agricultural enterprises continued to decline, dropping in 1992 by 2.8 per cent to 582,000.

Germans expect earnings decline of up to 5%

By Ariane Genillard in Bonn

WEST GERMAN agricultural profits are set to decline by up to 5 per cent this year despite a modest recovery last year, the German government said yesterday in its annual agricultural report.

Average agricultural profits rose by 4.3 per cent to DM47,721 (£20,000) per agricultural enterprise in the year ending June 1992. The rise was mainly a reflection of the higher prices of items such as pigments and milk and partly offset the 16 per cent plunge in farm income recorded the previous year.

However, the agricultural ministry expects this year's profits to fall by up to 5 per cent again due to a general decline of agricultural prices and last year's drought.

The German Bauernverband, the farmers' union, called the forecast over-optimistic and said farm revenues were likely to decline by between 5 and 10 per cent in 1993.

Mr Günther Bredehorn, agricultural policy spokesman for the government coalition Free Democrats party, added that West Germany's agricultural revenues were also likely to be

Options pit move lifts Fox coffee trading

By David Blackwell

TRADING VOLUME in robusta coffee futures and options contracts has soared at London Fox since its new options pit was opened at the end of last year.

Mr Robin Woodhead, who took over as chief executive of the troubled exchange in October last year, said yesterday that he was extremely pleased with the increase in volumes, which had followed positive action by the exchange.

Coffee options turnover hit a record 28,866 lots for January, the first full month of trading in the new pit. This marked a 63 per cent rise on December - itself a record month. Trading in the underlying futures contract, which was only 60,000 lots last November, reached 112,524 lots in January.

Cocoa options also showed strong growth, trading 11,925 lots in January, the best month since March 1991. Cocoa futures traded 142,178 lots, up from \$3,515 in December and 136,737 in November.

The options pit was moved to a position in between the coffee and cocoa futures markets on December 14, and a wall between the two markets was removed. "We believe the relocation has resulted in a significant increase in both options and underlying futures trading," said Mr Woodhead.

The London Fox chief executive plans to focus on increasing business in the core contracts at the exchange, which was in the doldrums for more than a year after a scandal in its now defunct property futures market.

The exchange has just received "a detailed and exhaustive study" of the sugar market from Landell Mills, the commodity consultants. Mr Woodhead said that the exchange hoped to make a decision on the future of its raw sugar market by the end of March.

The contract, which has switched from floor trading to screen trading and back over the past couple of years, has on some days registered no volume.

• The International Petroleum Exchange yesterday approved the extension of the forward trading range on its gas oil contract - widely used by airlines to hedge jet fuel prices - from nine months to 18 months as from March 12. The IPE said the move was made in response to demands from industry users.

Ministers believe there is scope for common promotion and research and development within the industry, but are convinced they should move swiftly to end the current marketing regime.

Their resolve has been hardened by this week's cabinet

Israeli citrus growers given state aid after exports fall 36%

By Hugh Carnegy in Jerusalem

ISRAEL'S parliamentary finance committee has approved \$25m in emergency state aid to the country's citrus industry, which has been hit this season by a 36 per cent fall in exports caused by a damaging combination of low yields at home and depressed prices abroad.

Traditionally the star in Israel's legendary "blooming desert" agricultural industry, the reality for the citrus sector in recent years has been a story of declining export earnings as inputs such as water grew in price while growers failed to keep pace with demand for popular high-value "easy peeler" and sweater varieties.

This season, yields have been slashed by prolonged spells of cold weather during the blossoming late last winter. Production of shoumatof, the standard variety that with grapefruits makes up the majority of Israeli output, is down by around 30 per cent, according to growers.

At the same time, prices have slumped in European markets, the main destination for Israeli fruit. Mr Menashe Davidson, chief executive of the Mehdaria Group, Israel's biggest exporter, said the price of fresh fruit had fallen by some 15 per cent while the price for juice concentrate had tumbled by a third compared with last year to less than US\$1.00 a tonne.

But the ministry of agricultur-

ture says the citrus industry still accounts for 10,000 jobs in total and needs the \$25m state aid to help it weather a temporary crisis.

Officials acknowledge that part of the problem is structural. The proportion of citrus exports made up of higher-value, more water-efficient modern varieties has grown rapidly in recent years to more than a third of the total, but progress has not been fast enough to blunt competition from countries such as Morocco and Spain.

Some of this season's difficulties are attributed to the squeeze imposed on less efficient growers by the liberalisation of export marketing last season, which removed the shelter of fixed prices for producers imposed by the old monopoly Citrus Marketing Board.

But Mr Davidson rejects hardline critics who argue that Israel should cut back on an industry that they say is in effect exports subsidised water, which Israel cannot afford.

"What we have to do is be more efficient and produce better products. We can do it," he says.

Knives out for UK potato scheme

By Alison Smith and David Owen

GOVERNMENT MINISTERS are determined to sweep away the UK's present potato marketing scheme, despite this week's setbacks to the necessary legislation.

The reverses came when a cross-party alliance of peers twice voted against the government's advice in the Lords on Tuesday night, backing first a move to protect the scheme ahead of an impending European Community declaration and then an amendment requiring a poll of registered producers before the Potato Marketing Board could apply for approval of a successor scheme.

Ministers believe there is scope for common promotion and research and development within the industry, but are convinced they should move swiftly to end the current marketing regime.

Their resolve has been hardened by this week's cabinet

movement to change the scheme, which it holds responsible for rising imports of processed potato products, has been underlined by Mr David Curry, the agriculture minister, in face of concerted cross-party opposition from MPs with potato-growing constituents.

It would be sacrificing the interests of UK potato farmers if we agreed a scheme in which everyone in the Community could plant what they wanted... but the United Kingdom alone was paged back by acreage quotas," Mr Curry argued.

But Mr Bill Walker, Tory MP for Tayside North where 46 per cent of the Scottish potato crop is grown, has warned that if the present scheme were scrapped, "the probability is that... farmers will be forced into cereals".

Low prices have led to substantial PMB intervention in the market this year, increasing the strength of many farmers' allegiance to the existing regime.

The government's commi-

North Sea storms halve Norwegian crude oil output

By Karen Fossli in Oslo

NORWEGIAN North Sea crude oil production was cut by half yesterday as raging storms forced the closure of the Statfjord and Snorre fields, and sharply cut output from the Gullfaks field, said Statoil, the

Norwegian state oil company. Norway normally produces a daily average of 2.3m barrels of oil but extremely high waves prevented crude tankers from loading oil from buoys at Statfjord and from Gullfaks as storage capacity had reached its limits at the two fields.

Statoil also stores oil from the 100,000 barrel-a-day Snorre field. Gullfaks was producing just 15,000 barrels yesterday, compared with its normal daily output of 49,000 barrels.

A Statoil spokesman said the weather forecast did not bode well for the resumption of full

production until at least Friday, when crude oil tankers might be able to commence loading if waves subside to 4.5 metres or less. He said that storms had created the worst conditions in 20 years for offshore crude oil loading by tankers.

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Their resolve has been hardened by this week's cabinet

MARKET REPORT**GOLD**

robust COFFEE largely recovered earlier losses by the close, boosted by a resumption of this week's upward trend in New York. The market mood had become much more constructive in the last few days, dealers said. COPPER continued to encounter difficulty in making upside headway on the LME. But a steady undertone emanated from escalating violence in Zaire and the Mexican copper refinery strike, dealers said.

Compiled from Reuters**SPOT MARKETS****Crude oil****Gold****Bronze****Brass****Copper****Lead****Mercury****Platinum****Potassium****Silver****Steel****tin**

Revived rate hopes bring new peaks

By Terry Byland,
UK Stock Market Editor

TURMOIL in European currencies provided the driving forces behind a powerful advance to new highs in the UK equity market yesterday. Share prices extended their gains in the second half of the session when rumours circulated that the Bundesbank might succumb to pressures from other ERM countries and cut rates by a full point this morning. A cut in German rates would open the way for further reductions in UK base rates, analysts believe.

The FT-SE Index gained 39.4, breaking through previous intra-day and closing peaks for a final reading of 2,373.8. Heavy volume across the full range of equities also took the FT-SE Mid 250 Index a new high of 3,026.6, up 28.3 on the day. London was encouraged at the close by widespread gains on Wall Street as it began its new trading session.

The fall in sterling to new lows against the mark, French franc and the yen quickly drove shares in Britain's leading export group ahead. Sterling was also perceived to be signalling expectations of another cut in UK base rates, the stock market electing to discard the rejection of such plans issued by Downing Street at the beginning of the week.

The combination of a further

effective devaluation of sterling with more interest rate reductions proved to be a strong stimulant for equities. The advance was checked briefly following news of an annual increase of 4.1 per cent in M-0 domestic money supply last month but found renewed strength later as attention turned to the ERM currency pressures.

Trading volume remained

high, but the Seaq total of 851m shares compared with 854m in the previous session. However, with the attention swinging back to the blue chip exported international stocks, the proportion of non-Footsie shares traded fell to 56 per cent yesterday from around 63 per cent earlier this week. Retail business remained high on Tuesday, returning a value total of £1.5bn.

Market strategists sounded

almost helpless in the face of the market's renewed strength but agreed that the FT-SE could easily challenge 2,900 very soon – unless the mood changes. Fears that depressed sterling may soon show through in the form of higher prices for imported goods were expressed.

The stock market is now trading on a multiple of around 10 times existing earnings. But Mr Roger Palmer of Kleinwort Benson Securities pointed to higher earning expectations for 1994 which would bring ratios down to around 12.8. London still looks the most attractive of all the major markets," he said.

The excitement generated during the second half of the session brought spectacular gains among the financial stocks. Dealers were cautious regarding some of the more speculative reasons put forward for gains in the sector.

Oil shares rounded off a strong session with further gains on the back of the strong opening on Wall Street.

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Unit Price	Offer Price	Per Unit	Yield	Unit Price	Offer Price	Per Unit	Yield	Unit Price	Offer Price	Per Unit	Yield	Unit Price	Offer Price	Per Unit	Yield	Unit Price	Offer Price	Per Unit	Yield	Unit Price	Offer Price	Per Unit	Yield				
John Cottrell Management (Jersey) Ltd				Lloyds Bank Trust Co (Gibraltar) Ltd				Cratere Group Ltd				Nassau Global Fund Ltd				Europe Value Fund Ltd				Global Asset Management - Canada				Orbitax Bahamas			
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	Capitol World Fund Ltd	1.13	1.13	0.00	1st National Bank, L-113 Luxembourg	0.77-357.000	0.77-357.000	0.00	07/21/92/11/92	0.77-357.000	0.77-357.000	0.00	07/21/92/11/92	0.77-357.000	0.77-357.000	0.00	07/21/92/11/92	0.77-357.000	0.77-357.000	0.00	07/21/92/11/92	0.77-357.000	0.77-357.000	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	Management International (Gibraltar) Ltd				Northwich Union Unit Portfolio Ltd	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	Minerals Oils Res. Shet. Fd. Inc.	1.37	1.37	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MetLife Fund Ltd	1.37	1.37	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MI Investment Management SA	2.02	2.02	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
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Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MI Investment Management SA	2.02	2.02	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
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Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MI Investment Management SA	2.02	2.02	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MI Investment Management SA	2.02	2.02	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MI Investment Management SA	2.02	2.02	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MI Investment Management SA	2.02	2.02	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MI Investment Management SA	2.02	2.02	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MI Investment Management SA	2.02	2.02	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MI Investment Management SA	2.02	2.02	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MI Investment Management SA	2.02	2.02	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MI Investment Management SA	2.02	2.02	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MI Investment Management SA	2.02	2.02	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MI Investment Management SA	2.02	2.02	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MI Investment Management SA	2.02	2.02	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MI Investment Management SA	2.02	2.02	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00	MI Investment Management SA	2.02	2.02	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00	01/20/92/04/92	0.51	0.51	0.00
Paragon Plus Ltd	10.00	10.00	0.00																								

CURRENCIES, MONEY AND CAPITAL MARKETS

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

Sudden return to turbulence

PRESSURES inside the European exchange rate mechanism intensified yesterday after the Danish krone fell to its floors against 3 of the system's currencies in a sharp burst of speculative selling, writes James Blitz.

The comparative calm that followed the devaluation of the Irish punt had been rudely shattered as the krone became the sixth currency in the ERM to be threatened with devaluation.

The krone had spent the first two days of this week on its ERM floor against the Irish punt. Yesterday, in the most turbulent day on the foreign exchanges since the autumn currency crisis, the Danish currency fell to its floors against the Dutch guilder and the D-Mark despite a rise in Danish interest rates and heavy central bank intervention.

After ERM trading closed yesterday, the krone was trading at Dkr4.8854 to the D-Mark, narrowly above its ERM floor of Dkr3.9016.

The outlook for the Danish currency looked grim last night, partly because Danish investors had sold their currency in large quantities, a sign of acute currency weakness.

€ IN NEW YORK

	Feb 3	Latest	Previous Close
1 Spot	1.3402	1.3450	1.3430
1 month	1.37-38	1.37-38	1.36-37
3 months	1.38-39	1.38-39	1.37-38
12 months	1.42-43	1.42-43	1.41-42

Forward premiums and discounts apply to the US dollar

The Belgian franc's fall to third from bottom of the ERM grid also indicated how serious tensions in the ERM have suddenly become.

The Belgian currency's fortunes are closely linked to the D-Mark. But yesterday, 3 month Belgian francs were trading about 20 basis points above 3-month D-Marks, a sign that investors may be looking for a premium against the build-up of the ERM.

The pound dropped to historic new lows against the D-Mark, the French franc and the Japanese yen in European trading. It closed in London at DM2.8600, down 1% pennies on the day and at FRF8.003 against the French franc.

The pound also slumped during the day to a new 1993 low of \$1.4255 against a dollar which itself reached a 9-month high against the D-Mark. The pound closed in London at \$1.4340, down more than a cent on the day.

"There is a risk of a vertical fall for sterling which would have a very serious impact on financial markets," he said.

EMS EUROPEAN CURRENCY UNIT RATES

	Feb 3	Latest	Previous Close
1 Month	1.3402	1.3450	1.3430
3 months	1.37-38	1.37-38	1.36-37
6 months	1.38-39	1.38-39	1.37-38
12 months	1.42-43	1.42-43	1.41-42

Estimated rates taken towards the end of London trading. Six-month forward dollar 1.77-1.7820, 12-month 2.05-2.0650.

Forward premiums and discounts apply to the US dollar

STERLING INDEX

	Feb 3	Latest	Previous Close
8.30	77.1	77.8	77.7
9.00	76.5	77.7	77.7
10.00	76.5	77.7	77.7
11.00	76.5	77.7	77.7
12.00	76.5	77.7	77.7
1.00	76.5	77.5	77.5
2.00	76.5	77.5	77.5
3.00	76.5	77.4	77.4
4.00	76.5	77.1	77.1

CURRENCY RATES

	Feb 3	Special 1	European 1	US	Forward 1
1 Month	0.6357/87	0.6253/73	0.6253/73	0.6253/73	0.6253/73
3 months	0.6357/87	0.6253/73	0.6253/73	0.6253/73	0.6253/73
6 months	0.6357/87	0.6253/73	0.6253/73	0.6253/73	0.6253/73
12 months	0.6357/87	0.6253/73	0.6253/73	0.6253/73	0.6253/73

Estimated rates taken towards the end of London trading. Six-month forward dollar 1.77-1.7820, 12-month 2.05-2.0650.

A bank rate refers to central bank discount rates. These are not quoted by the UK, Spain and Ireland.

All Euro rates are for Feb. 2.

All SDR rates are for Feb. 2.

Commercial rates taken towards the end of London trading. Six-month forward dollar 1.77-1.7820, 12-month 2.05-2.0650.

Forward premiums and discounts apply to the US dollar and not to the individual currency.

EURO-CURRENCY INTEREST RATES

	Feb 3	Short term	7 days	One Month	Three Months	Six Months	One Year
Switzerland	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
US	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Canada	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Australia	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Belgium	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Denmark	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Spain	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Sweden	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
UK	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Portugal	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Italy	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
France	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Austria	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Belgium	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Denmark	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Spain	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Sweden	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
UK	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Portugal	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Italy	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
France	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Austria	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Belgium	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Denmark	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Spain	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Sweden	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
UK	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Portugal	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Italy	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
France	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Austria	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Belgium	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Denmark	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Spain	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Sweden	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
UK	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Portugal	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
Italy	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4
France	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.4-6.4	5.			

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

CANADA																			
Date	Stock	High	Low	Close	Cong	Sales	Stock	High	Low	Close	Cong	Sales	Stock	High	Low	Close	Cong		
TORONTO																			
4 pm close February 3																			
Quotations in cents unless marked \$																			
11/00	ABBI Pr	\$14.5	\$14.5	\$14.5	-10	100	ABBI Pr	\$17.4	\$17.4	\$17.4	-10	37700	Mackenzie	\$5.2	\$5.2	\$5.2	-10		
2/2000	ACB Cds	\$24.5	\$24.5	\$24.5	-10	100	ACB Cds	\$24.5	\$24.5	\$24.5	-10	32000	SHL Syst	\$5.5	\$5.5	\$5.5	-10		
4/2000	ACB Cds	\$24.5	\$24.5	\$24.5	-10	100	ACB Cds	\$24.5	\$24.5	\$24.5	-10	32000	SHL Syst	\$5.5	\$5.5	\$5.5	-10		
4/2000	ADM Inc	\$55.5	\$55.5	\$55.5	-10	100	ADM Inc	\$53.5	\$53.5	\$53.5	-10	60000	Southern	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
4/2000	AMT T&T	\$20.5	\$20.5	\$20.5	-10	100	AMT T&T	\$20.5	\$20.5	\$20.5	-10	85100	Stora A	\$17.5	\$17.5	\$17.5	-10		
7/700	Mark Ray	\$480	\$480	\$480	-10	100	Mark Ray	\$475	\$475	\$475	-10	83800	Stora A	\$17.5	\$17.5	\$17.5	-10		
2/2000	DU Pont A	\$41.5	\$41.5	\$41.5	-10	100	DU Pont A	\$41.5	\$41.5	\$41.5	-10	22000	Tek B	\$16.5	\$16.5	\$16.5	-10		
2/2000	DU Pont A	\$41.5	\$41.5	\$41.5	-10	100	DU Pont A	\$41.5	\$41.5	\$41.5	-10	21100	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	EMC Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	EMC Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	21000	Teleplus Corp	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10		
2/2000	Empire Inv	\$15.5	\$15.5	\$15.5	-10	100	Empire Inv	\$15.											

NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE COMPOSITE PRICES

4 pm close February 5

Marinero

مكتبة الأصل

AMERICA

Good company results give equities a lift

Wall Street

A combination of strong corporate results, the successful completion of Chrysler's huge share offering and firmer stock-index futures provided US stock markets with a big lift yesterday, writes Patrick Harwood in New York.

At 1pm, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 43.23 at 3,371.90. The more broadly-based Standard & Poor's 500 was 3.29 higher at 445.85, while the Amex composite was up 2.22 at 414.40, and the Nasdaq composite 3.76 firmer at 708.88. Trading volume on the NYSE was 210m shares by 1pm.

There was no single factor behind yesterday's big gains. The markets, however, were delighted at the way Chrysler's \$1.78bn stock sale went on Tuesday. Strong demand from investors pushed up the price of the offering late in the day, allowing the carmaker to issue more shares, making it the second largest public stock offering in US history. The decision by Standard & Poor's, the big ratings agency, to upgrade its ratings on Chrysler's debt yesterday also boosted sentiment.

Other factors driving prices higher were more strong

fourth quarter earnings, notably from Salomon and Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing, higher bond prices, and demand for stock-index futures in the Chicago derivatives markets. The economic background was also positive, with the string of recent bullish data pointing to solid growth.

MEXICO extended its run of weakness on higher interest rates, fears of equity oversupply and worries about delays in the approval of the NAFTA free trade agreement. The IFC index fell another 40.14, or 2.5 per cent, to 1,584.01 at midday yesterday. Tuesday's 2.4 per cent decline, bringing its fall to 10 per cent since the beginning of 1993.

Chrysler was the most heavily traded stock, with more than 10m shares changing hands following Tuesday's offering. By early afternoon the stock was unchanged at \$33.4, the price at which the 45m new shares were sold.

Salomon jumped \$2.4 to \$33.4, a 52-week high, after reporting fourth quarter profits of \$143m, a big turnaround from the \$29m loss incurred at the same stage of 1991.

Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing climbed \$2 to \$100.7

Buenos Aires eases back after rollercoaster ride

John Barham on prospects for Argentine equities

ARGENTINA was never going to be a smooth ride, but even hard-bitten players of the developing world's equity markets have had an uncomfortable time over the last few months.

After crashing 28 per cent in the second half of 1992, and then recovering strongly through until mid-January, the market has seen its upward surge peter out. Yesterday the Merval index closed at 413.38, 3 per cent down since the beginning of the year.

Brokers, eternal optimists, say that this will be the year when Buenos Aires finally breaks with its speculative past and starts growing into a mature capital market. Although they have been saying this for a long time, and even though Argentines still play the market as if it were a casino, as long as Argentina's free market reforms remain on track, its equity markets will probably remain attractive.

Mr Eduardo Tapia, director general of Baring Securities Argentina SA, doubts that there much chance of a repeat of the 1981 boom which drove prices up by 372 per cent, because investors' funds, resources and new share issues waiting to hit the market will cancel each other out. "There will not be a boom," says Mr Tapia, "but a positive trend all along the year."

This hypothesis has its weaknesses. Argentine shares are not exactly cheap. Baring's forecasts indicate a price earnings ratio of 13.1 for the market this year, against 16.9 for 1992. On the other side of the coin, there is no underestimating Argentines' herd instinct. On Friday, within minutes of the government announcing new measures deregulating financial

markets, share prices began rising, to close 9 per cent up in the day.

Argentines account for two-thirds of market turnover. As soon as they notice foreigners entering the market in force, which is widely believed to signal a change in market fortunes, they too frantically pile in and push prices to unsatisfactory levels.

This situation could lead to a sharp downward correction which would shake the market, deflect capital from Argentina and discourage new companies from entering the market. About three dozen new companies are in the pipeline for a market debut at the moment.

The greatest fear of all surrounds President Carlos Menem's determination to amend the constitution, which bars re-election of incumbents, and so stand for re-election when his term ends in 1993. To do so, he must sweep congressional elections slated for this autumn and win two-thirds of the seats in the lower house of Congress.

Investors worry that Mr Menem will slacken his reforms to win the elections.

FT-ACTUARIES WORLD INDICES

Jointly compiled by The Financial Times Limited, Goldman, Sachs & Co. and NatWest Securities Limited

In conjunction with the Institute of Actuaries and the Faculty of Actuaries

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL MARKETS	TUESDAY FEBRUARY 2 1993				MONDAY FEBRUARY 1 1993				DOLLAR INDEX									
	US Dollar Index	Day's Change %	Pound Sterling Index	Yen Index	DM Index	Local Currency Index	Local Index on day	Gross Div. Index	US Dollar Index	Pound Sterling Index	Yen Index	DM Index	Local Currency Index	1982/83 Index	1982/83 High	1982/83 Low	(approx)	
Australia (88)	121.05	+0.5	124.11	85.63	100.34	116.63	+0.0	4.10	120.49	122.90	85.17	102.55	116.69	153.68	108.18	143.44		
Austria (18)	135.50	-0.1	143.03	110.10	118.93	115.26	+0.6	1.93	135.63	142.42	109.23	115.83	115.21	131.16	178.21	131.16	178.21	
Belgium (138)	138.88	-0.2	142.43	110.38	119.41	116.77	+0.2	5.17	140.22	143.02	110.74	112.33	116.83	152.27	131.19	142.67		
Canada (113)	114.33	+0.3	117.22	90.22	97.59	104.52	+0.2	3.16	113.98	116.26	90.02	95.59	104.32	142.12	111.36	137.41		
Denmark (33)	204.43	+0.3	209.60	161.34	174.52	178.14	+0.7	1.65	203.91	207.89	161.05	175.54	174.93	273.94	181.70	265.35		
Finland (25)	67.00	+0.1	68.77	53.33	54.24	58.15	+0.1	7.87	67.60	68.50	53.35	57.53	58.00	89.80	52.10	89.80		
France (22)	104.50	-0.3	104.82	117.77	121.96	124.15	+0.2	1.55	104.82	105.42	117.49	105.60	104.53	120.49	103.63	120.49		
Germany (62)	105.57	-0.4	108.24	83.92	80.12	90.12	-0.1	2.53	105.57	108.08	83.70	90.18	90.18	129.69	101.59	119.68		
Hong Kong (55)	223.77	+0.2	231.48	178.17	192.74	219.44	+0.2	4.03	223.11	227.73	179.73	193.61	205.91	262.26	178.38	205.91		
Italy (16)	135.90	-0.8	140.36	108.04	116.88	129.94	-0.3	4.08	138.03	140.84	109.08	117.51	130.32	173.71	122.95	171.00		
Japan (72)	104.75	+0.2	107.40	22.57	25.97	27.07	+0.1	5.04	105.03	107.53	22.57	25.97	26.02	80.85	47.47	80.85	127.48	
Malaysia (69)	261.34	+0.7	267.98	206.24	223.10	264.21	+0.8	2.51	259.82	264.28	209.04	220.95	262.17	282.42	212.49	228.16		
Mexico (18)	156.47	+1.0	167.15	127.07	136.58	152.16	+1.0	1.13	155.13	156.26	125.27	132.25	126.16	178.77	118.56	152.78		
Netherlands (25)	153.18	-0.5	157.03	120.87	130.75	129.11	-0.2	4.40	153.90	156.88	121.55	130.98	128.88	169.70	147.88	153.39		
New Zealand (19)	140.01	-0.2	143.55	110.50	118.53	126.59	-0.1	1.82	140.22	142.03	118.59	126.24	130.07	148.52	113.07	148.52		
Norway (22)	140.01	-0.2	143.55	110.50	118.53	126.59	-0.1	1.82	140.22	142.03	118.59	126.24	130.07	148.52	113.07	148.52		
Singapore (38)	221.51	+0.3	227.11	174.81	181.09	186.22	+0.3	1.98	220.92	226.34	174.49	180.02	187.76	228.63	175.65	224.48		
South Africa (60)	162.57	+2.0	166.58	128.29	138.77	160.44	+0.3	3.08	159.52	162.62	125.84	135.50	165.44	236.60	134.21	248.37		
Spain (47)	125.88	+1.7	129.58	99.95	108.12	111.83	+2.1	5.42	124.58	127.08	98.40	105.03	104.88	161.72	107.10	168.07		
Sweden (55)	110.73	-0.3	113.54	105.40	107.45	114.44	+0.4	2.25	110.73	113.54	105.40	107.45	110.73	120.28	149.85	105.18	120.28	
United Kingdom (226)	165.34	-1.0	162.52	130.47	141.13	169.52	-0.5	4.39	167.05	170.40	131.83	142.16	170.40	200.07	161.88	183.47		
USA (522)	180.95	+0.3	185.57	142.84	154.51	160.99	+0.5	2.75	180.95	184.58	142.93	154.01	180.98	180.99	160.92	180.93		
Europe (780)	134.16	-0.5	137.54	105.87	114.52	128.99	-0.1	3.71	134.83	137.63	106.49	114.75	134.83	141.31	146.15			
Nordic (14)	144.30	+0.0	147.95	113.88	123.18	140.50	-0.1	2.18	144.25	147.14	113.94	122.77	140.55	158.88	131.31	146.15		
Portugal (45)	119.43	+0.1	122.45	80.50	84.00	87.67	+0.2	2.45	119.43	121.45	80.50	84.00	87.67	141.97	93.70	141.97		
Euro-Pacific (465)	178.88	-0.1	181.41	138.90	141.													